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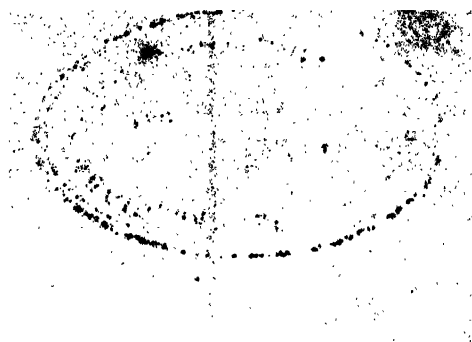
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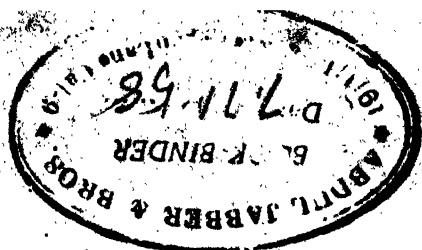
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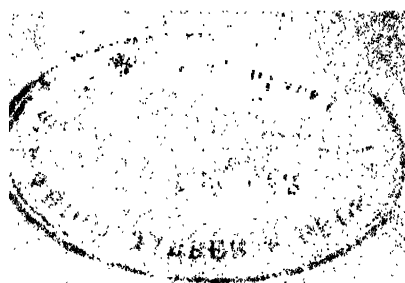
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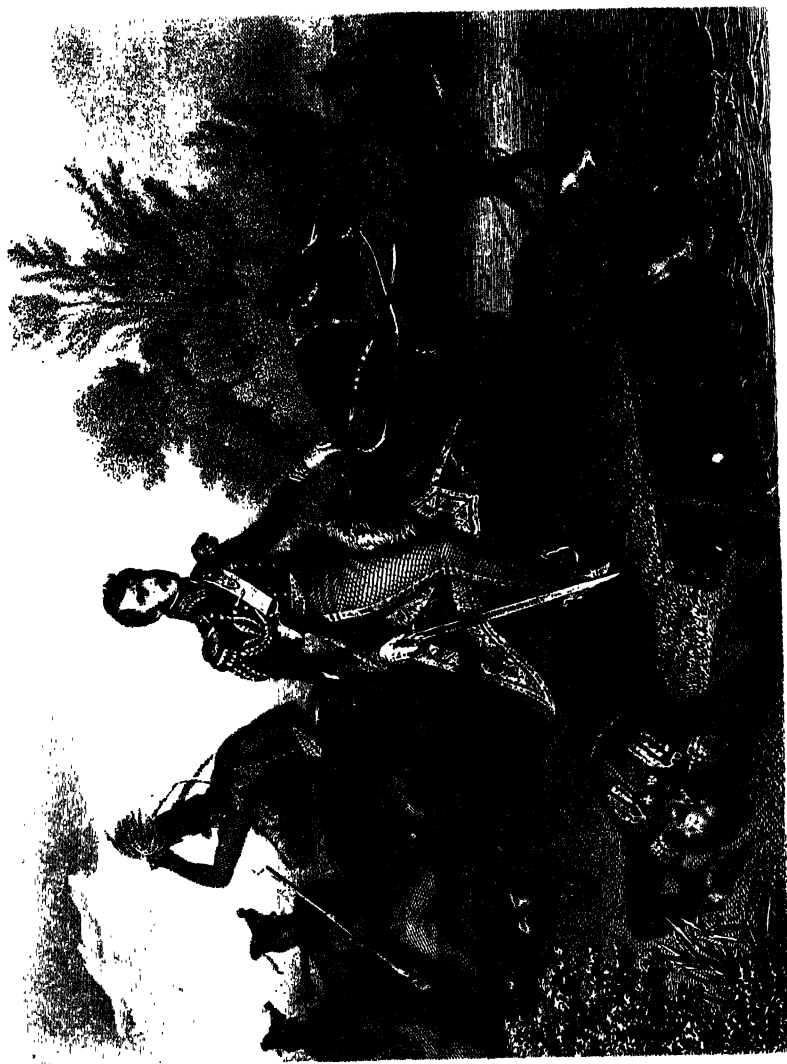












HISTORY OF THE  
CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE  
OF FRANCE  
UNDER NAPOLEON

By LOUIS ADOLPHE THIERS

TRANSLATED, WITH THE SANCTION AND APPROVAL  
OF THE AUTHOR, BY  
D. FORBES CAMPBELL AND JOHN STEBBING

With Thirty-six Steel Plates



IN TWELVE VOLUMES  
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*Wm. Keble*

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# HISTORY OF THE CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE OF FRANCE UNDER NAPOLEON.

## BOOK XLIX.

### DRESDEN AND VITTORIA.

IN signing the armistice of Pleiswitz, Napoleon's only intention was to gain two months' time in which to complete his armaments, and to raise them to a strength sufficient to meet the new enemies he was about to create; but he had never for a moment entertained the idea of peace, being utterly unwilling to conclude it on the conditions dictated by Austria; which conditions, so frequently propounded during the last four months, sometimes by simple insinuations, but also by the recent and formal declarations of M. de Bubna, were, as we have seen, as follows: The dissolution of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw; the reconstruction of Prussia by means of the addition to it of a considerable portion of this Grand Duchy, and some portions of the Hanseatic provinces; the restoration to Germany of the free towns of Lubeck, Bremen, and Hamburg; the abolition of the Confederation of the Rhine; the restoration to Austria of Illyria and the portions of Poland which had formerly belonged to her. Although a continental peace on these terms, the sure precursor of a maritime peace, would leave to France, independently of Belgium and the Rhenish provinces, Holland, Piedmont, Tuscany, the Roman States to exist as French departments, with Westphalia, Lombardy, and Naples as royal vassals; Napoleon absolutely rejected it, not on account of the loss of territory which it would involve, and which would be very small, but because it would cast a cloud upon his glory. He unhesitatingly preferred to its acceptance, therefore, war with the whole of Europe—a resolution which was doubtless remarkably bold with respect to his own fortunes, very cruel

with respect to the many victims which it sacrificed on fields of battle, and a species of outrage against France, exposed to so many dangers simply on account of the pride of her ruler; but it was a resolution which he had now taken, and from which it was unlikely he would be turned. It would have been well had he had around him better counsellors, or at least counsellors possessed of more influence over him, and capable of inducing him to renounce the fatal resolutions he had adopted. In the meantime, although thoroughly resolved upon the course he intended to pursue, as is sufficiently evident from his orders, his diplomatic communications, and some confidential avowals made to the most intimate of his courtiers, he was nevertheless unwilling that it should be known, either to the powers with whom he had to negotiate, or to the general body of the agents of his government, of whose active zeal he had great need. In fact, the knowledge on the part of Austria of Napoleon's real intentions could not but definitively array that power against us, increase her activity, already very great, in the completion of her armaments, spread a feeling of despair amongst our allies, who were even now dissatisfied at their alliance with us, and render impossible that prolongation of the armistice which Napoleon considered so essential to his plans, and which he did not despair of obtaining by protracting the negotiations. His resolution not to accept or even acknowledge the men who composed his government would have speedily become public, have increased the aversion so widely inspired by his policy, have extended this aversion to his person and his dynasty, have rendered the levy of troops a more difficult task, and both irritated and discouraged the army, which, seeing no limit to the effusion of its blood, would have indulged in still bolder and bitterer language. It seemed in truth as though the opposition, repressed on all sides, had found refuge in the camps, and that our soldiers of all ranks had chosen as the price of the sacrifices demanded of them the exercise of the inalienable liberty of the Frenchman's spirit. After having hurled themselves in the morning into the midst of dangers, they passed the evening in deploring in their bivouacs the fatal obstinacy which caused so much blood to flow in support of a policy which began to be incomprehensible. They had admitted that the French arms had need, after Moscow and the Beresina, of some glorious vengeance; but when, after Lutzen and Bautzen, the prestige of our arms had been restored, they would have been shocked, and their zeal have been chilled, had they learned that Napoleon, having it in his power to retain possession of Belgium, the Rhenish provinces, Holland, Piedmont, and Tuscany, could not be contented, but wished to bring destruction upon tens of thousands

of men for the purpose of enabling him to retain Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bremen, and to keep that empty title of Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine. On account of all these reasons, then, Napoleon confessed to no one, except perhaps to M. de Bassano, his real intentions; saying only to each just what it was necessary each should know for the purpose of being able to accomplish his particular task, and reserving for himself alone the complete scheme of his fatal designs.

We have already narrated that M. de Bubna had repaired to the French headquarters with the Austrian conditions, and that these conditions had been considerably modified, since by deferring to the period of the conclusion of a maritime peace the sacrifice of the Hanseatic towns and the Confederation of the Rhine, the only objection which could reasonably be raised against them had been removed. And Napoleon, perceiving himself, therefore, to be now pressed closely, and fearing to have to declare himself immediately—the consequences of which would be to bring down upon him the weight of the Austrian arms before he should be sufficiently prepared—had signed the disadvantageous armistice of Pleiswitz, not for the purpose of gaining time in which to treat, but time for the completion of his armaments. He wrote secretly to Prince Eugène and the minister of war that he had signed this armistice, the danger of which he partly perceived, for the purpose of obtaining the necessary time for the completion of the armaments which he was preparing against Austria, upon whom he intended to impose the law, rather than receive it from her. He recommended them to neglect nothing which could tend to render the army of Italy (intended to threaten Austria by Carinthia), and the army of Mayence (intended to threaten her by Bavaria), ready to take the field by the end of July; but he refrained from explaining to either the one or the other of these persons what was this law laid down by Austria to which he was unwilling to submit, leaving them to believe that the demands of this power were excessive, and tended to nothing less than the ruin of the power of France, and the annihilation of her glory. He wrote to Prince Cambacérès, to whom on his departure he had entrusted the exercise of his authority, that the armistice which had been signed would doubtless lead to peace, *but that this was no reason for any relaxation in the preparations for war, being on the contrary a reason for redoubling them, since we could only hope to obtain a secure and honourable peace by convincing our enemies that we were at all points well prepared.* But to Prince Cambacérès, as to the others, he feared to explain what he understood by the term *a sure and honourable peace*; and he refrained, therefore, from avowing to him that he did not understand by it such a peace as, independently of the

Rhine and the Alps, should resign to France, either directly or indirectly, Holland, Westphalia, Piedmont, Lombardy, Tuscany, the Roman States, and Naples.

Only to M. de Bassano, whom he could not deceive, since this minister conducted, on the part of France, all the communications with the European powers, and because he had no reason to fear any objections in this quarter, he declared his real intentions, entrusting to him also the task of receiving M. de Bubna, whom, he told him, he was anxious to avoid seeing, that he might not be compelled to explain himself with respect to the Austrian conditions. He further directed M. de Bassano to carry this envoy to Dresden, whither the French headquarters were about to return, and to retain him there until his return, by which means would be gained ten days, and the assembly of the plenipotentiaries delayed until the middle of June, when by raising difficulties with respect to the forms of procedure to be adopted, it would be possible to defer any decision upon the matters actually in dispute until the month of July. And then, by showing at the last moment a disposition to treat, and thus increasing the little time which would still remain, it would be possible, he considered, to protract yet a month longer the duration of the armistice, by which means three months in all would be procured for the completion of the French armaments—three months of which the allied powers would doubtless take advantage for a similar purpose, but not to such good effect as France, since their administrative functions were carried on neither with so much activity nor skill as hers.

Having determined upon this plan, Napoleon made M. de Bassano set out for Dresden, directing him to announce his own speedy arrival at that capital, and to seek out for him a fit and convenient dwelling in the suburbs, where he might be able to work free from interruption, breathing a pure air, and be near the camps of instruction established on the bank of the Elbe. He ordered to be conveyed thither a portion of his household, together with the *Comédie Française*, in order that he might display there a species of pacific splendour, which should breathe around him an air of tranquil confidence and inclination for repose—an inclination which had never been so alien to his heart as at this time. *It is as well*, he wrote to Prince Cambacérès, *that people should think that we are amusing ourselves here.*

According to his custom, Napoleon did not leave his troops until he had made due provision for their support, health, and instruction during the suspension of arms. He had reserved, by the conditions of the armistice, Lower Silesia, a country rich in every species of material, as well for the clothing as

the provisioning of troops, and he had distributed his *corps d'armée* there, from the mountains of Bohemia to the Oder, in the following manner. He posted Reynier at Gorkitz with the 7th corps, Macdonald at Lowenberg with the 11th, Lauriston at Goldberg with the 5th, Ney at Liegnitz with the 3rd, Marmont at Buntzlau with the 6th, Bertrand at Sprottau with the 4th, Mortier in the environs of Glogau with the infantry of the young guard, Victor at Crossen with the 2nd, Latour-Maubourg and Sebastiani on the Oder with the cavalry reserves, whilst Marshal Oudinot, with the corps intended to march upon Berlin, was cantoned on the boundaries of Saxony and Brandenburg, which formed from the Oder to the Elbe the line of demarcation stipulated for by the armistice. These various corps were to take up their quarters in the villages or in barracks, passing their time in the practice of military manoeuvres and the enjoyment of repose. They were to be supported by means of requisitions levied upon the surrounding districts, the supplies thus obtained being so managed as to afford subsistence for the troops during three months at least, and a supply of provisions available at the period of the renewal of hostilities. Napoleon ordered, moreover, that levies of cloths and other woven fabrics should be made in that portion of Silesia which remained to him, and which produced them in abundance, for the purpose of renewing the already well-worn garments of his soldiers. As Silesia was in all cases to return into the possession of Prussia since Austria would not have it, he had no need to bestow any greater care upon the management of its resources than just such as would make them last as long as his need of them.

Glogau alone of all his fortresses on the Oder and the Vistula having had the advantage of being free from blockade, he renewed its garrison and supplies of provisions, and gave directions for the completion of its means of defence. He sent officers to Custrin, Stettin, and Dantzig to inform the garrisons of these places of the late triumphs of our arms, to convey to them rewards, and to take care that the provisions consumed each day were immediately replaced by equal quantities, in conformity with the express conditions of the armistice. It had been agreed by one of the stipulations of the armistice that the important fortress of Hamburg should go with the tide of war, and should remain in the hands of those who might occupy it on the evening of the 8th of June. It had fallen again into our possession on the 29th of May, by means of the arrival of General Vandamme at the head of two divisions, and would have done so at an earlier period, but for the singular and for a moment inexplicable conduct of Denmark on this occasion. Up to this time Denmark had been faithful to us, and justly

so, since it was for the purpose of preserving to her the possession of Norway that we were at war with Sweden. Immediately after the Moscow catastrophe, it had been urgently entreated by Russia and England to abandon Norway to Sweden, an indemnity at the expense of France being promised her should she yield, and the annihilation of her monarchy being threatened should she refuse. To these entreaties and menaces of Russia and England had been added gentler solicitations on the part of Austria, this power inviting Denmark to become her ally, and promising that the possession of Norway should be secured to her if she would adhere to the Austrian mediatorial policy. In the midst of this conflict of suggestions of all kinds, Denmark, fearing that France would be no longer able to afford her support, had loyally demanded of Napoleon that he should authorise her to treat on her own account, in order to escape the perils with which she was threatened. To this request Napoleon, touched by her candour, had generously consented, even dismissing the Danish sailors who served on board our vessels, that her position might be still more thoroughly neutral. The hope entertained by Denmark had been, that by making peace with England through the mediation of Russia, and then remaining neutral with all the world, she might render her possession of Norway secure; but it had been speedily intimated to her that she must not only immediately declare war against us—a proceeding which could not but be a severe blow to her feelings of loyalty—but must, moreover, renounce the possession of Norway, receiving in exchange, eventually, an indemnity of such a nature as would compel her to add spoliation of our territories to defection from our alliance. Disgusted by these demands, Denmark had definitively returned to us, and one of her divisions, which had occupied a position at the gates of Hamburg in an equivocal and almost threatening attitude, had ultimately declared itself on our side. Vandamme had then driven out Tettenborn's mixed force, composed of Cossacks, Prussians, men of Mecklenburg, and soldiers of the Hanseatic towns, and had set up once more the French eagles along the whole course of the Lower Elbe. Napoleon had immediately sent orders to Marshal Davout to establish himself strongly in Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck, reiterating his injunctions to punish the revolt of these towns with the utmost severity, and to draw from them the resources necessary for the support of his army, and directing him to create upon the Lower Elbe a vast military establishment, which should complete the defences of this extensive stream, upon which we now had possession of Königstein, Dresden, Torgau, Wittenberg, Magdeburg, and Hamburg; and which important line, the object of such animated dispute in the

course of the negotiation of the armistice, was therefore secured to us, independently of that of the Oder, of which we possessed the most essential portion—that which was opposite Dresden. Some hostile troops had, it is true, passed the line of the Elbe, and overrun at this time Westphalia, Hesse, and Saxony, spreading everywhere that terror of the Cossacks which had become almost a superstition; but Napoleon had formed in his rear a corps of infantry and cavalry, whose duty it was to pursue these marauders to the utmost, and to sabre without mercy all those whom it should find on this side of the Elbe. The Duke of Padua, to whom it was intended to entrust the command of the 3rd corps of cavalry when the two first, those of Latour-Maubourg and Sebastiani, should be completed, was now at Leipsic with the nucleus of his corps, which numbered about three thousand troopers, with a few pieces of artillery. Napoleon added to it the Polish division Dombrowski, the division Teste (Marmont's 4th), left in the rear for the completion of its organisation, a second Wurtemberg division, which had recently arrived, and some garrison battalions from Magdeburg, the whole forming a mass of troops numbering some eight thousand horse and twelve thousand infantry. To this force he prescribed the performance of the functions of a police throughout the country between the Elbe and the Rhine, that it might be restored to a state of order, and freed from the marauders; and gave orders that if any of these should be taken after the 8th of June, the extreme limit assigned to hostilities, they should be treated as simple bandits, being at least made prisoners for the purpose of seizing their horses, which were excellent.

Having thus taken preliminary measures for the observance of the armistice and the welfare of his troops during its continuance, Napoleon proceeded towards Dresden, where he intended to remain during the progress of the impending negotiations, and retrograded towards the Elbe with the cavalry and infantry of the old guard, making his own journey accord with that of the troops, by which means he did not reach Dresden until the 10th, which was fully in accordance with his design of delaying as long as possible his meeting with M. de Bubna. The King of Saxony met him upon his approach, and the inhabitants of Dresden itself, seeing with pleasure the war removed from their own thresholds, and their king treated with honour, gave him a reception such as could scarcely have been expected on the part of a German population.

Napoleon alighted at the Marcolini Palace, which had been selected by M. de Bassano for his residence, and which, surrounded by a large and handsome garden, was situated in the Friedrichstadt faubourg, near the Oisterwise plain, where the



numerous troops would be able to manœuvre on the bank of the Elbe. Napoleon found here his household already installed and ready to receive him; and here, without being at the charge of the Saxon court, or interrupted by it, he had all that he desired—a suitable establishment, fresh air, a rural aspect, and a field proper for the manœuvres of troops. He determined to have here a morning levee as at the Tuileries, to review and manœuvre his troops in the middle of the day, and to devote the evenings to dinners and receptions, and the *chef-d'œuvre* of Corneille, Racine, and Molière, as represented by the French comedians. On the very day even succeeding that of his arrival at Dresden, his mode of life fell with military precision into that course of life upon which he had resolved. But in the meantime, M. de Bubna, who had been now a whole fortnight at Dresden, awaited an interview with him in vain, and at length reminded him of his presence by a formal note, couched in terms which rendered a prompt and explicit reply absolutely necessary.

To understand this note and its importance, we must be informed of the last series of events which had taken place in Austria, where, as elsewhere, events succeeded each other with prodigious rapidity, under the influence of the violent impulse given by Napoleon to the whole course of European affairs. In employing M. de Caulaincourt in the negotiation of the armistice, for the purpose of procuring some opportunity for coming to a direct arrangement with Russia, Napoleon had furnished this power with a dangerous weapon, of which it was subsequently to make the most disastrous use. Had the Emperor Alexander, less hurt than he actually was by Napoleon's contemptuous treatment of him, and less fascinated by his new rôle of *king of kings*, been able to entertain Prince Kutusof's opinion that Russia should conclude the war with France by signing a separate peace, the sending of M. de Caulaincourt to him would have been a very happy measure, since he had been long his confidant and almost his friend. But as, intoxicated by the adulation lavished upon him by the Germans, Alexander had become, in spite of his natural gentleness, an implacable enemy, whom it was dangerous even to attempt to address, the sending to him of M. de Caulaincourt, so far from touching him, but furnished him with a means of putting an end to Austria's protracted hesitations. It was, in fact, to afford to Alexander an opportunity of saying to this power, "You must now decide upon the course you intend to pursue, for if, instead of aiding us, you leave us to struggle alone, as at Lutzen and Bautzen, we shall be forced to treat with our common enemy, to accept the advances he has made to us, to conclude with him a peace solely advantageous to Russia, and definitively leave you to the effects of his resentment; for if you have done nothing to help

us, you have nevertheless done what is quite sufficient to inspire him with the greatest distrust of you ;" language, of which the employment at the court of Vienna would be very apropos on the morrow of the battle of Bautzen, when a fresh retrograde movement would remove the coalition forces from the Austrian frontier, and deprive them of all contact with her. It was now or never, therefore, the time for Austria to unite herself with the allies, for one step more, and the hands now outstretched towards each other would be unable to clasp.

Such were the arguments which it had been resolved to use with the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich ; and whilst MM. Kleist and de Schouvaloff negotiated at Pleiswitz the armistice of the 4th of June, the selection made by France of M. de Caulaincourt for this negotiation had been pointed out to M. de Stadion, a lie being even added to the truth, mention being made of certain insinuations which it was falsely pretended this personage had permitted himself to make, to the effect that Napoleon was inclined to come to a direct understanding with Russia at the expense of Austria. Everything that could possibly be surmised from the mere circumstance of M. de Caulaincourt's mission was set forth by Russia as being an accomplished fact, and M. de Stadion was urged to declare to his government that that which was refused to-day would of necessity have to be accepted within a few days, under the pressure of circumstances and Napoleon's victories. M. de Stadion, who was hostile to France, and was much startled at the presence of M. de Caulaincourt, hastened to explain to his court, in exaggerated terms, the imminent danger of a direct arrangement between France and Russia. Distrusting even the effect of written words, the allies sent to Vienna, as has been already related, M. de Nesselrode, a minister who during forty years has never failed to urge upon his masters a policy which, profound by reason of its element of patience, was by no means always such as accorded with their irritable temperaments. At the period of which we treat he was still a young man, of a straightforward and modest temperament, less dogmatic than M. de Metternich, and also less enterprising, but equally skilled in finesse, and precisely fitted to gain the confidence of an enlightened prince like Alexander, over whom he had already gained a considerable degree of influence. The czar, although he had left M. de Romanzoff in possession of the empty title of chancellor, in remembrance of the additions which had been made to the Russian empire of Finland and Bessarabia during his ministry, had summoned M. de Nesselrode to headquarters, and consulted him with respect to the conduct of affairs. On the 1st of June he sent him to Vienna, with directions to make use of entreaties, prayers, and even threats, if necessary

—unveiling the Medusa's head, or, in other words, pointing at the probability of an interview between Napoleon and Alexander, of the renewal on the Oder of the conference of the Niemen, and the renewal at Breslau of the alliance of Tilsit.

These proceedings were more than sufficient to produce a decided effect upon such far-seeing politicians as the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich. Austria, in fact, replaced by fortune in that position of importance from which she had been hurled twenty years since by the sword of Napoleon, was threatened nevertheless by a serious danger. Overwhelmed on all sides with caresses, she was besieged from every quarter with the most magnificent offers. Alexander proffered for her acceptance not only Illyria and a portion of Poland, but also Italy, the Tyrol, the imperial crown of Germany, which Napoleon had torn from her brow, and more than all, independence. France, on her side, also offered her Illyria and a portion of Poland, but instead of Italy, the Tyrol, and the imperial crown, offered her Silesia, a possession which she had much prized in a previous age, and refrained from offering her that independence upon which she set a higher value than upon aught else. She had, therefore, but to exercise her choice between these various offers; but if from a desire to play too long the rôle of an universally courted power she should fail to decide at the right moment, it might very possibly happen that after having been flattered and caressed by all, she would end by being as universally outraged by all, and crushed under their common resentment; for the result of a reconciliation between Napoleon and Alexander would be a peace exclusively Russian; such a peace as would leave Austria without any portion of Poland, Illyria, or Italy; as would ignore her desire for the reconstitution of Germany, except so far as this might be accomplished by the bestowal of certain recompenses for her services upon Prussia; and so far from restoring to her her independence, would throw her back into the power of Napoleon, become a severer master than ever. For the accomplishment of all this a moment would suffice, for in the existing conjunction of circumstances affairs were decided in the flashing of a sword—a sword of such a species as in forty-eight hours was capable of changing the fortunes of the world.

Fully conscious of these truths, M. de Metternich had already taken care to connect his master to Prague, that he might be near the scene of conflict and negotiation, be able from Bohemia, as from an elevated and neighboring post of observation, to watch the rapid torrent of affairs, and be ready to plunge into its midst at the right moment. The news that M. de Caulaincourt had been chosen for the negotiation of the armistice had had an effect upon him which had not escaped the keen eyes of

M. de Narbonne. The letters of M. Stadion had rendered any doubt upon the actual position of affairs impossible, and within four-and-twenty hours the emperor and his minister had resolved to set out from Vienna for Prague, a great source of astonishment for the public, which was surprised, not at the adoption of such a course, but at the promptitude with which it had been taken. In the existing state of the relations between Austria and France, the former power was under some degree of obligation to explain her movements to the latter, and M. de Metternich had hastened, therefore, to say to M. de Narbonne, that as negotiations were about to commence through the intervention of the Austrian government, it was necessary that it should be near the parties who had submitted to its arbitration, and that by its presence at Prague six days at least would be gained upon each communication. This reason was a sufficient justification for the journey to Prague, but not for the departure within twenty-four hours. Secret information, and the evident constraint of M. de Metternich's manner, revealed the whole truth to the French legation. M. de Narbonne had learned, by means of information on which every reliance could be placed, that the court of Vienna would hasten its departure on account of the fear entertained by it of the conclusion of a direct arrangement between France and Russia, and in this information had found an explanation of the new sentiments which he had discovered, he thought, to be entertained by M. de Metternich. M. de Narbonne, in fact, had found the manner of the Austrian minister manifestly colder, which was very natural; for if M. de Metternich had escaped from our alliance, as a serpent escapes by means of writhing alternately in opposite directions from the clutch of a muscular hand, he nevertheless had not entirely deserted our cause, and in the very sage intention of putting an end to all existing difficulties, without recourse to arms, he had defended with the allies, with some difficulty, the adoption of a moderate peace, and he was now convinced that we had been endeavouring to negotiate a peace adverse to Austria, whilst Austria had been striving to obtain one advantageous for us.

M. de Narbonne, however, had scarcely had time to discuss the state of affairs with M. de Metternich, who, having set out in all haste, was from the 3rd of June with the Emperor Francis at Gitschin, a residence situated twenty leagues from Prague, and where on his arrival he had found M. de Nesselrode, who on learning the departure of the court from Vienna had retraced his steps for the purpose of meeting it. The conversation which took place between these two statesmen, at that time of such high importance, may be readily imagined. M. de Nesselrode had, in the name of the Emperor of Russia and the

King of Prussia, entreated M. de Metternich to put an end to the too protracted hesitations of his court, and to take care that the allies should not be still further vanquished in the field, since another defeat would compel them to submit to Napoleon, to come to terms with him at the expense of Austria, and to subject Europe to a hopeless state of dependence. M. de Nesselrode had endeavoured above all things to point out to M. de Metternich that Napoleon was acting treacherously towards the Austrians, since whilst they were endeavouring to obtain for him a peace founded upon a moderate basis, he was entertaining the idea of sacrificing their interests by the conclusion of a peace which should be entirely to their injury. He had then proceeded to urge with the utmost earnestness the Austrian minister to follow the example of Prussia, and to unite his country by a formal treaty with the allied sovereigns. But M. de Metternich, whose merit it had always been to maintain, whilst his spirit was far from being a passionless one, a policy which no passion was allowed to sway, continued to adhere with even increasing firmness to the plan he had adopted of exhausting every attempt at arbitration before passing from the mediatorial attitude to one of hostility; and this course, whilst it was well fitted to preserve from any slur the honour of the Emperor Francis, as well in his imperial as in his paternal character, had the advantage, moreover, of procuring for Austria the time of which she had need for the purpose of arming, and above all, of preserving the possibility of a peaceable arrangement.

M. de Metternich's profound political foresight rendered him anxious to avoid not only the danger of seeing the contending parties, weary of his protracted hesitations, settle their disputes at the expense of Austria, but also the danger of defeat before the arms of France, a possibility which he still greatly dreaded, in spite of the events of the preceding year; and for these reasons, therefore, he was desirous of holding Prussia and Russia with one hand in such a manner that they might not escape him, whilst with the other, drawing Napoleon to the acceptance of a peace such as the other European powers would accept. Entertaining this plan, therefore, he had said to M. de Nesselrode that he had undertaken the post of arbitrator, that he would frankly fulfil the duties of this position during the two following months, and that it was absolutely necessary that Austria, with respect to France, should assume the rôle of a mediator before passing to that of an enemy, but that if reasonable conditions of peace should be absolutely rejected by the latter country, he would then advise his master, the armistice being concluded, to join the allied powers in making one supreme and last effort to rescue Europe from subjection to Napoleon.

In reply to the expression of these views, it was absolutely promised on the part of Russia that it would not permit itself to be seduced by the temptation of a direct arrangement between herself and France; Austria at the same time promising to declare war at the time above stated should France reject the bases of peace proposed by her. In the meantime, M. de Metternich, taking advantage of the vicinity of Prague, summoned thither M. de Bubna, for the purpose of explaining to him the position of affairs, and whilst positively declaring to him that Austria was not as yet in any way committed to the allies, authorised him to declare this truth, adducing in support of it the honour of the Austrian emperor himself, but also authorised him to intimate in the most decided manner that Austria would certainly join them if the period of the armistice were not employed in the negotiation of a moderate peace. He was at the same time directed to announce to the French cabinet that the mediation of Austria had been formally accepted by Prussia and Russia, and that the former power being now, therefore, the recognised arbitrator, had to demand of each of the belligerents the conditions on which they would severally accept peace, and especially of France, who was now accordingly requested to explain herself on this head. Whilst making this demand, M. de Bubna was to take the opportunity of expressing M. de Metternich's desire to pay a brief visit to Dresden, for the purpose of solving all difficulties at once, in a cordial interview with Napoleon.

Such were the matters, and matters of high importance they were, which M. de Bubna on his return to Dresden was anxious to communicate to Napoleon, and of which he communicated but one portion to M. de Bassano, well knowing the inutility of entering into any explanations with this minister, who adopted the ideas of his master, instead of inspiring his master with his own. Napoleon having arrived on the 10th of June, M. de Bubna sent in a note on the 11th, to the effect that Russia and Prussia had formally accepted the arbitration of Austria, that she was now demanding of them the conditions which they proposed as the bases of a peace, and that she awaited the enunciation on the part of France of hers; the object of this note being, not to obtain the immediate enunciation of the terms on which Napoleon would make peace, but to give rise to those preliminary discussions and confidential intimations which would necessarily precede any official and definitive declaration.

If Napoleon had been willing to accept peace on those terms alone on which it was obtainable, and which he well knew, he would now have lost no time, since there remained but forty days at the most in which it could be negotiated. It was now,

in fact, the 10th of June, and the armistice would expire on the 10th of July. With his accustomed ardour he would have invited M. de Metternich to Dresden, endeavoured to induce him to make some modifications in the Austrian propositions, and sent him again and again to the headquarters of the allies, for the purpose of solving the difficulties, arising from matters of detail, which are necessarily attendant upon the negotiation of any treaty, and which would naturally be more than usually numerous upon the negotiation of a treaty which was to have reference to the interests of the whole world. But the evident proof (independent of the irrefutable proofs to be found in his correspondence) that he was unwilling to accept such a peace is to be found in the fact that he now wasted, and continued to waste, the time during which its negotiation would have been possible. His plan was, as has already been explained, to defer the period of explanation by multiplying the difficulties respecting matters of form, to show a sudden disposition at the moment when the armistice should be about to expire to give way upon these points, to obtain by this sign of a desire for peace a prolongation of the suspension of arms, to obtain thus a period of leisure up to the 1st of September for the completion of his armaments, to break off the negotiations at that time on some plea well calculated to deceive the public, to fall suddenly with the whole weight of his arms upon the forces of the coalition, to crush them utterly, and to re-establish upon a firmer basis than ever his disputed domination—a pardonable calculation, and one for which the history of conquering princes might afford too much support had it been founded on realities. Such being his views, he did not consider it yet the right time to receive M. de Bubna, and to accept by a decided Yes or No conditions which were few in number, and the meaning of which could admit of but little doubt. He resolved, therefore, to let three or four days elapse before receiving M. de Bubna, or replying to his note; a delay which would have been very natural had no precise limit been fixed to the continuance of the negotiations, and if, as at the treaty of Westphalia, they could have been allowed to extend over months and even years. But to lose four or five days out of forty on account of a mere matter of form, any hesitation respecting which was to presuppose discussion respecting a thousand others, was only a too manifest means of expressing his, Napoleon's real wishes, or of pointing out rather what his wishes were utterly opposed to.

As Napoleon, however, arrived at Dresden much fatigued, doubtless, and overwhelmed with all kinds of cares, his not granting an audience to M. de Bubna on the first day of his arrival might be readily understood, had it not been the fact,

as it was, that when Napoleon was really pressed, day and night, fatigue and repose were matters of which he was equally regardless. His not being hurried with respect to the conclusion of the peace at this moment was equivalent, in short, to his not desiring it. M. de Bassano received M. de Bubna's despatch, affected to regard it of extreme importance, and said that an answer would be given to it within three or four days, when Napoleon would grant a personal interview to M. de Bubna, and explain himself with respect to the matters which it contained.

During this interval the answer was prepared and drawn up, and was of a nature more fitted even than the voluntary loss of time to manifest the real designs of the French government. In the first place, it was objected to M. de Bubna that he possessed no official character which could authorise him to submit a note to the French court; and in fact this minister, whom Napoleon had officially received, and who had been sent to him as being more agreeable to him than any other, and as being more spirituel than the Prince of Schwarzenberg, whose character was rather the reverse, had never been formally accredited, either as plenipotentiary or ambassador, and he had no qualification, therefore, for the transmission of a diplomatic note; but to make a difficulty with respect to this matter was an absurdity, since the French court had already exchanged with this personage the most important communications. A preliminary reply to M. de Bubna was drawn up, in which it was maintained that it was necessary that the note presented by him should be signed by M. de Metternich before it could be placed in the French archives, since he himself possessed no diplomatic character which could give it authenticity.

After this difficulty with respect to form, difficulties were raised with respect to the substance of the note itself. The first of these related to the mediation. France had doubtless, it was said, appeared disposed to accept the arbitration of Austria, and had even promised to accept it, but so important a resolution could not of course be deduced or supposed from what might take place in the course of an ordinary interview, and could only be formally agreed to at an official meeting, at which the object, form, method of procedure, and duration of this mediation should be duly determined. And how again, it was further asked, could this arbitration be made conformable to the treaty of alliance between France and Austria if the latter power were to assume the position of an armed mediator ready to declare war against the disputants, either on the one side or the other? And finally, what was to be the form of the mediation? A question of form, respecting which the honour of France would not permit her to be silent; for the



arbitrator, assuming his office with a certain rude haste, had already declared a method of carrying on the negotiations which could not be agreeable to the French court—a method which consisted in permitting the negotiators to discuss the various matters in hand only through the intervention of the arbitrator. Such a method, it was urged, was quite inadmissible on the part of France, since she could not permit any one to assume the right of taking out of her own hands the privilege of treating with respect to her own affairs, and as to submit to such a course would be to subject herself to the terms of a peace concerted amongst foreign powers—a degradation to which France, so long victorious, and able to dictate conditions to Europe, was not yet reduced, especially at a time when victory had just returned to her arms. She was willing, for the purpose of contributing to that peace of which all the world had such great need, to refrain from stating conditions; but she would never, although the whole of Europe should combine against her, submit to have them dictated to her.

These quibbles were made the subject of many notes, and of a long interview also between Napoleon and M. de Bubna. This interview took place on the 14th of June, and the notes were signed and despatched on the 15th. M. de Bassano accompanied them by a private letter for M. de Metternich, the tone of which was opposed to the end in view, for Napoleon wished to gain time, and the indulgence in frank language was not the means by which this object could be attained. In this letter the loss of time, which had already taken place, was attributed to M. de Metternich, and complaint was made that the armistice having been signed on the 4th of June, so little progress had been made that it was now the 15th; a complaint which was somewhat maladroit, as M. de Bubna had been since the latter days of May at the French headquarters demanding an interview in vain, and since Austria had shown herself unceasingly impatient both to receive and to give explanations on all points. Finally, with respect to the desire expressed by M. de Metternich to pay a visit to Dresden, M. de Bassano, not even eluding it, replied in a manner which was scarcely polite, that the questions under discussion were as yet in too indeterminate a shape to receive from an interview between M. de Metternich and the French minister of foreign affairs, or Napoleon himself, all that light which, at a somewhat later period, it might well be expected to shed upon them.

Such were the replies with which M. de Bubna had to be contented, and which were sent to M. de Metternich at Prague. As the distance to this city could not be traversed under a day, and as three or four days might be employed by M. de

Metternich and his master in determining upon their next step, Napoleon could hope that the 20th of June would have arrived before he should be compelled to make any further communications. As, moreover, it would be fairly allowable to the French diplomatists to spend on their side three or four days in determining upon the text of the agreement by which they should accept the Austrian arbitration, and as some additional days would necessarily be employed in assembling the plenipotentiaries, the 1st of July would have arrived before the negotiations had begun; and then it would be only necessary to display a conciliatory disposition for a short period, as for example, from the 1st to the 10th of July, to be successful in a demand that the conclusion of the armistice should be deferred from the 20th of July to the 20th of August, which, with six days for the declaration of hostilities, would defer the recommencement of them until the 26th of August, or almost as long as Napoleon desired.

But whilst he was thus anxious to waste time in negotiations, he was equally anxious to employ it to the greatest advantage in the accomplishment of his vast military designs. His first project, when he had reckoned on the alliance or neutrality of Austria, had been to advance as far as the Oder and the Vistula, for the purpose of driving back the Russians vanquished and separated from the Prussians upon the Niemen. But the supposition of a war with Austria compelled an alteration in his plans, since in that case, by advancing only to the Oder, he would leave the Austrian armies upon his flanks and rear. He had therefore to choose his future line of defence between the Elbe and the Rhine or the Maine, at the most. He preferred the Elbe, for profound strategical reasons, which are generally little known or appreciated. Let us observe, in the first place, that to have advanced upon the Rhine or the Maine would have been much the same thing, since the little stream of the Maine, flowing in a serpentine course across the mountainous country of Franconia, and falling, after a very short course, into the Rhine at Mayence, would serve very well as a defence to the approaches of the Rhine in a campaign fought with armies of sixty or eighty thousand men, but would not serve for this purpose in one fought with masses of five or six hundred thousand troops, since it would in this case be outflanked either on the right or the left within a fortnight. The chance lay therefore between the Rhine and the Elbe; and to raise the question as to which should be selected was almost to answer it. To fall back upon the Rhine was to make a sacrifice of territory far more humiliating than any sacrifice which had been demanded as a condition of peace. It was to abandon not only the alliance of Saxony, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden,

&c., but the Hanseatic towns, the possession of which we had so vehemently disputed, Westphalia, and a portion of Holland. And how would it be possible to demand for France the protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine, when declaring, by a retrograde movement, that France was unable to defend it? And how assert a right to the possession of the Hanseatic towns, Westphalia, and Holland, whilst acknowledging an inability to occupy them? The acceptance of the conditions of peace proposed by Austria would indeed have been far preferable to the choice of this ground as a battlefield, for in the former case, whilst renouncing the Confederation of the Rhine and the Hanseatic towns, France would have at least retained indisputable possession of Westphalia and Holland; Napoleon's sovereignty, and which was of far more importance, the territorial grandeur of the French empire, being at the same time definitively rendered secure. Independently of these reasons, which were, in a political point of view, decisive, there was another which could not but be, both morally and politically, regarded as of great weight, and this was, that to fall back upon the Rhine was to carry the theatre of the war to France itself, since, although, of course, as long as the enemy had not crossed the Rhine the war might be considered to be carried on out of France, it would nevertheless be so close that the sufferings resulting to the frontier provinces would be almost the same as though it were waged within it. Moreover, by obtaining victories on the Upper Rhine, between Strasburg and Mayence for example, Napoleon could not be certain that one of his lieutenants might not suffer his position to be forced below him, the result of which would be that the war would henceforth be waged upon French ground, and the position of its emperor be changed from that of a conqueror endeavouring to bring the world under his subjection to that of a monarch compelled to fight in defence of his own kingdom. Those, therefore, who blame him for having chosen the line of the Elbe, should rather reproach him for not having accepted the peace which was offered him, since the acceptance of this peace would have involved far fewer sacrifices of all kinds than would have been incurred by an immediate retreat upon the Rhine. The deplorable plea of continuing the war for the sake of the Hanseatic towns and the Confederation of the Rhine having been once adopted by him, it was evident that the only course open to him was the occupation and defence of the line of the Elbe.

This was a point on which Napoleon's lofty military genius could not be deceived, and after brooding as an eagle over the map of Europe, he had swooped down upon Dresden as upon a rock from whence he might hold at bay the whole

number of his enemies. The narrative of the events which subsequently took place will show us that if he was forced from this position it was not on account of any weakness in the position itself, but on account of the extraordinary extension of his combinations, the exhaustion of his army, and the patriotic fury aroused against him throughout the whole of Europe. Six years sooner, at the head of the army of Friedland, he might have maintained his ground there against the world.

The line of the Elbe, although presenting in its upper portion a line of defence less formidable than that of the Rhine, had the advantage, on the other hand, of being less long and less *accidentée*, of offering interior facilities for the transmission of succours from one point to the other, and of being, from the mountains of Bohemia to the sea, furnished with solid points of support, such as Königstein, Dresden, Torgau, Wittenberg, and Hamburg. To render these points serviceable, some of them required to be strengthened by military works, and it was for this reason that Napoleon, whose military calculations were always more profound than his diplomatic schemes, was so anxious to prolong the armistice, and thus repair the fault of having signed it. The important question was, whether the line of the Elbe, resting on its extreme right on the mountains of Bohemia, and Bohemia affording to Austria the means of debouching on the rear of this position, it would be possible to defend it against an attempt of the enemy to turn it? And the answer to this question was a matter of grave doubt to many enlightened minds. Napoleon, however, treated with disdain any observation intimating that his position of Dresden might be turned by a descent of the Austrians upon Freyberg or upon Chemnitz, replying with good reason that the best gift he could ask of Heaven would be that the principal mass of his enemies should, whilst he was posted on the Elbe, debouch behind this stream, that he might fall upon and completely envelop it between the Elbe and the forest of Thuringia. The disaster suffered by the allies at Dresden speedily proved the justness of his previsions; and if his line were subsequently forced upon the Elbe, it was not by Bohemia, but by the Lower Elbe, which his lieutenants did not know how to defend, and which many accidents had much enfeebled. His plan, then, was to establish himself on the various points of the Elbe so strongly as to be able, if necessary, to withdraw from this line during several days without fear, should it, on the one hand, be advisable to advance to meet the mass of hostile troops moving down upon him in front, or, on the other, to fall back rapidly upon that which might have debouched by Bohemia upon his rear; to repeat, in short, with five hundred thousand

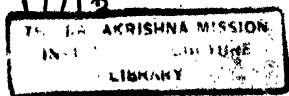
men against seven hundred thousand, the achievements he had accomplished in his youth with fifty thousand Frenchmen against eighty thousand Austrians. But the glory of realising upon so vast a scale the prodigies of his youth was to be withheld from him as a punishment for having been wasteful as well of human lives as of worldly advantages—of the bodies of his subjects as well as of their affections.

To obtain of the line of the Elbe all its advantages, it was necessary to employ the period of the armistice in fortifying the principal points, and to proceed with the utmost expedition in this work, whether we should succeed or not in prolonging the suspension of arms. The first of these points was that of Königstein, at the spot where the Elbe flows from the mountains of Bohemia and enters Saxony. Two rocks, the Königstein and the Lilienstein, posted as two advanced sentinels, the one on the left, the other on the right, of the stream, guard and narrow the channel of the Elbe on its entrance into the German plains. On the Königstein rock, which was situated on our side, that is, on the left bank of the river, stood the fortress of the same name, commanding the celebrated camp of Pirna, rendered illustrious by the wars of Frederick the Great. Its military works required no addition, but as its garrison was composed of Saxon troops, Napoleon gradually replaced them by Frenchmen. He also ordered that there should be collected within this citadel ten thousand quintaux of flour, and that ovens should be constructed there, that it might contain, for reasons which will hereafter be seen, the means of providing food for a hundred thousand men during nine or ten days. On the rock situated on the opposite bank of the river, that of Lilienstein, there existed scarcely any military resources, and Napoleon accordingly commanded the rapid prosecution of works which would afford secure shelter for two thousand men, and entrusted their due execution to the care of General Roguet, a distinguished general of his guard. He then collected a number of boats sufficient for the construction there of a spacious and solid bridge, capable of affording a passage for a considerable army; and which, fortified as it would be by the Lilienstein and Königstein forts, would be protected from every attack. Napoleon's profound military foresight had led him to calculate that if a hostile army, realising the prognostications of more than one alarmist, should debouch from Bohemia on his rear, for the purpose of attacking Dresden, whilst he should be, it might be, at Bautzen, he would by means of this bridge be able to cross the Elbe at Königstein and take the imprudent hostile army in reverse.

After the fortresses of Königstein and Lilienstein came that of Dresden, which was to be the central point of the impending

operations, and to become what Verona had been in the wars of Italy. During his last Austrian campaign, being unwilling to expose Dresden to the fate of becoming the point against which should be directed the enemy's operations, and desiring to spare his gentle ally the King of Saxony the trial of a siege, Napoleon had advised the Saxon government to demolish the fortifications of Dresden, and replace them by those of Torgau; whereupon, by a species of negligence which was too common, the military works of Dresden had been destroyed before those of Torgau had been more than just commenced. This was a circumstance much to be regretted, but Napoleon took measures for obviating its disadvantage by works which, although hastily constructed, would serve for the purpose he had in view; giving directions for the repair of such portions of the fortifications of Dresden as still remained, and having the suburbs of this city surrounded by palisades and well-armed redoubts. On the right bank of the river, however, at Neustadt (new town), he ordered the construction of a series of works of a more formidable nature, and such as would form a vast *tête-de-pont* almost completely fortified. Two bridges of woodwork, built the one above and the other below the stone bridge, were to serve, in addition to the latter, as the means of communication between the opposite banks of the stream. Duly executed, these various works would enable thirty thousand men to defend themselves in Dresden during a fortnight against two hundred thousand enemies, if under the command of a general of great military genius. To these means of defence Napoleon added immense magazines, the method of supplying which we shall presently see, and hospitals sufficiently extensive for the wants of the largest army.

After Dresden, Napoleon devoted his attention to Torgau and Wittenberg. His principle with respect to fortifications was that they may always be erected where an abundant supply of wood is available, and that earthworks provided with wooden palisades are capable of furnishing the means of a most prolonged resistance. It was in this way that Napoleon determined to supply the deficiencies in the fortifications at Torgau and Wittenberg, and he gave the necessary orders for the completion of these works in the course of six or seven weeks. Thousands of well-paid Saxon peasants worked day and night at Königstein, Dresden, Torgau, and Wittenberg; at these latter places, as at the two former, the establishment of magazines and hospitals proceeding simultaneously with the construction of defensive works. At Magdeburg, which was one of the strongest fortresses of Europe, there was no need of any addition to the solid defences; it was only necessary, therefore, to complete its armament, and furnish it with a garrison; and



Napoleon determined to devote to it a *corps d'armée*, which, without being entirely *immobilisé*, should serve both as a garrison and as a flying corps, to form a link between our two principal bodies of troops in the field, that of the Upper and that of the Lower Elbe. He resolved also to transport to Magdeburg almost the whole of his wounded and the cavalry *depôt* of General Bourcier, for at this fortress they would not only be sheltered from attack, and in a position where they would not clog the movements of our active troops, but would also find there extensive hospital buildings and open spaces for the construction of barracks. Situated as it was, moreover, at an almost equal distance between Hamburg and Dresden, it would form a most valuable *depôt* between the two extreme points of our line of battle. Napoleon appointed to be its governor his aide-de-camp General Lemarois, an intelligent and energetic officer, and gave directions to convert the whole of Magdeburg into hospitals and barracks. He calculated that by sending to Magdeburg all the sick and wounded who were in his way at Dresden, and the cavalry *depôts* of General Bourcier, now in Hanover, there would always be there sufficient convalescents and dismounted troopers to supply a garrison corps of seven or eight thousand men, whilst the corps mobile of twenty thousand men which he intended to establish at Magdeburg for the purpose of forming a link between the armies of the Upper and Lower Elbe would add to this number five or six thousand more, and thus raise the whole strength of the garrison to about fifteen thousand men; the remainder of the column mobile being at liberty to manoeuvre around the fortress to a considerable distance, without compromising its safety.

From Magdeburg to Hamburg the course of the Elbe was entirely undefended, no single point between these two cities being fortified. This subject had occupied Napoleon's attention from the day of the signature of the armistice, and after having entertained many projects with respect to it, he had at length sent General Haxo to discover by personal inspection what would be the best method of supplying the deficiency. After patient consideration he had determined to construct at Werben, a place situated nearer Magdeburg than Hamburg, at the top of the angle formed by the course of the Elbe as it turns from a northerly to a westerly direction, and its nearest point to Berlin, a species of citadel formed of earthworks and palisades, and furnished with barracks and magazines, in which three thousand men might be able to hold their ground for a considerable time.

The last and most important object of his solicitude was Hamburg; and this great commercial city, which was one of the chief reasons on account of which he had rejected a peace

of which there was so much need, he had not only to defend by force of argument against hostile diplomatists, but also by force of arms against hostile armies. Want of time, however, unfortunately, in this case, as in others, prevented the construction of any other than temporary works. Ten years and forty millions of money would have been required to make Hamburg a fortress, as capable of resisting an enemy as Dantzic, Magdeburg, or Metz. In such time and with such resources as were at his disposal, however, Napoleon formed of Hamburg a vast military establishment, which was partly a fortress and partly an entrenched camp, and which offered the means to a resolute man, such as Marshal Davout speedily proved himself, of opposing to an enemy a protracted resistance.

There remained below Hamburg, at the very mouth of the Elbe, the fort of Gluckstadt, the defence of which was confided to the Danes, whom unworthy treatment had driven to the necessity of sharing our fortunes.

Thus from the mountains of Bohemia to the northern ocean the line of the Elbe would be studded with a series of fortified posts, of strength proportionate to the importance of their several positions, and provided with bridges which would be in our exclusive possession, and would enable us to move our forces from one bank to the other with the utmost facility. Napoleon's maxim, that the course of a river should only be defended on the offensive, so to speak, that is, by securing all the points at which it may be passed, and keeping means of effecting its passage always available—this maxim, we say, was now in the case of the Elbe to receive its most distinguished illustration.

It still remained, however, to provide for the expenses of the works which, if they were to be executed with the necessary rapidity, would require ready money; whilst, moreover, immense depôts of provisions had to be added to the military establishments already enumerated, for the purpose of supplying the vast bodies of men who were about to be manœuvred along this line of the Elbe. And with respect to these matters, Napoleon showed as much ingenuity as determination to make the heavy charges of the war fall on the populations of the countries in which it would be waged.

We have seen that he had ordered Marshal Davout to exact a cruel retribution for their revolt from the inhabitants of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen, directing him to shoot immediately the old senators, the officers or soldiers of the Hanseatic legion, and the persons who had acted as the officials of the insurrectional movement, and then to draw up a list of five hundred of the principal merchants for the purpose of seizing their possessions. He had relied, when giving these orders,



upon the inexorable rigour of Marshal Davout, but also, we may add, for the honour of both of them, upon this marshal's good sense and probity. But the fact was that when the latter had reached Hamburg he found no delinquents to shoot, the frontier of Denmark, which was at the very gate of the city, having served as the means of escape to almost the whole of them. Some much-to-be-regretted executions had indeed taken place before his arrival, but that was during the first movement of the insurrection, in the month of February, and as a punishment for the disgraceful treatment to which the French officials had been subjected.

As the marshal was fortunate enough to have to put no person to death, it only remained for him to draw up a list of persons who were not to lose their lives but their goods; and this project appeared to him to be as ill advised as the other. The Hamburg citizens, who were or were supposed to be culpable, were collected en masse in the little town of Altona, really a suburb of Hamburg itself, and Marshal Davout represented to Napoleon that the most advantageous course would be to promise pardon to such of them as should return to their own dwellings within a certain time, punishing them only by the imposition of a heavy fine, which they would at first declare themselves incapable of paying, but which they would certainly eventually pay, and which would be a species of punishment they would feel very acutely, whilst at the same time it would procure for the use of our troops a large supply of money. Large resources instead of bloodshed was the résumé of the policy which he advised the emperor to adopt.

Napoleon, who was fond of having large resources at his command, and who had no taste for bloodshed, accepted the marshal's proposal, and wrote to him—"If you had had a few persons shot on the morrow of your arrival, it would have been as well; it is now too late; and pecuniary punishments will be the best." It is thus that despotism and war teach men to speak, even those who have no cruelty in their hearts. It was determined, then, that every Hamburg citizen who should return within a fortnight should be pardoned, that the others should suffer sequestration of their property, and that the city of Hamburg itself should pay, in money or goods, a contribution of fifty millions. A small portion of this contribution was, however, to be levied on Lubeck, Bremen, and the districts of the 32nd military division. Ten millions were to be paid in money and twenty millions in bills; whilst the remainder was to be set off against such requisitions of matériel and provisions as the French commissariat might demand of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen. The value of the houses

which might be demolished for the purpose of constructing the Hamburg defences was also to be taken into account as in part payment of these fifty millions. The Hamburg citizens complained bitterly at the fine thus imposed upon them, and were anxious to present a petition to Napoleon on the subject, but he refused to receive them, and as the marshal, who a few days before had defended them from the rigour of the sentence, was now perfectly inflexible, they were compelled to pay down that portion of the fine which was to be paid immediately, and the payment of which was of most importance to the necessities of the army. About ten millions of money were sent to Dresden, and great quantities of grain, cattle, and spirits were embarked on the Elbe for the purpose of being carried up its stream.

As soon as Napoleon found himself in possession of these resources, he made arrangements for their disposal in such a manner as might render them available on all the points of the Elbe, and especially at Dresden, for the support of the numerous troops which he was about to concentrate upon it. He was desirous of having at Dresden, the chief central point of his operations, sufficient provisions for the supply of three hundred thousand men during two months, and especially a large reserve of biscuit, which, carried by the troops themselves, would render it possible for them to execute manœuvres occupying seven or eight days without being checked by considerations with regard to provisions. For the attainment of this object it would be necessary to have a hundred thousand quintaux of grain or flour at Dresden, and eight or ten thousand at Königstein. There were already at Magdeburg about seventy thousand, which had been collected there during the winter, to serve either as provisions in case of siege, or for the support of troops on their march; and Napoleon now ordered that these seventy thousand quintaux should be transported by the Elbe to Dresden, and replaced immediately by an equal quantity drawn from Hamburg—an arrangement which shortened by one-half the space over which these immense quantities of provisions had to be conveyed. As it had been perceived that rations of rice were a very effective means of cure for the dysentery to which the young soldiers were liable when overcome by fatigue and the heat of the weather, possession was taken of all the rice to be found at Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck; the same places being also made to contribute supplies of spirits, salted meat, cattle, horses, leather, and woven fabrics.

But whilst Napoleon was thus rendering the line of the Elbe both a powerful line of defence and an inexhaustible dépôt of provisions, he did not confine his attention to this line alone.

He was anxious to have beyond Dresden, at Liegnitz, and on the nearer side of Dresden, at Erfurth, magazines as well furnished as those on the Elbe; and taking advantage of the richness of Lower Silesia, in which was encamped the army which had fought at Bautzen, and the resources of which he cared little to husband, he ordered that the period of the armistice should be employed in this district in the collection of twenty days' provisions for each corps. With respect to the districts behind Dresden, as at Erfurth, Weimar, Leipsic, Nuremberg, and Wurzburg, these being Saxon or Franconian, and consequently friendly countries, he could not make use of any of their resources but by means of purchase; but here also he ordered the formation of vast stores of provisions, which were to be duly bought. With respect to the city of Leipsic, on the other hand, this city having displayed open hostility towards him, he showed less moderation, compelling it to afford contributions of woven fabrics, grain, and spirits, goods with which its magazines were abundantly supplied, taking possession of its public buildings for the purpose of converting them into hospitals, and adding to all this a threat that at the first sign of revolt he would burn the city to the ground. The cities of Erfurth, Naumbourg, Weimar, and Wurzburg were equally filled with hospitals. Erfurth, of which he had retained possession since 1809, and Wurzburg, which was the capital of the Grand Duchy of Wurzburg—places which were capable of offering a certain amount of resistance to an attacking enemy—were armed, that there might be a series of fortified points along the Mayence route, should events which were not then anticipated render a retreat necessary; for, as we have already remarked, Napoleon, whilst unwilling to admit the possibility of a defeat as an element in his political calculations, never failed to provide for it in his schemes of military tactics. But whilst Napoleon was devising these means for rendering his line of battle at the renewal of operations both well defended and well provisioned, he did not neglect to render the number of his troops proportionate to the probable extent of the war in which they were to be engaged, for his vast intellect was equal to the simultaneous consideration of every subject.

We have already seen that whilst flattering himself with the idea that Austria would probably accede to his plans, he had nevertheless taken his measures in accordance with the contrary hypothesis, and had prepared in Westphalia, on the Rhine, and in Italy, three armies of reserve; and he resolved, during the three months through which he hoped to extend the armistice, to complete their formation.

In Westphalia were, as we have already said, the reorganised regiments of the grand army of Russia, which were intended to

form two large corps under Marshals Victor and Davout. The other regiments of the grand army had been sent to Italy. As the battalions of each regiment could not be all reorganised simultaneously, the second battalions had been first reconstituted, then the 4th, and finally the 1st, according to the period of the return of the staffs; and the divisions had been successively composed of 2nd, 4th, and 1st battalions, so that each regiment was divided into three divisions. Napoleon, anxious to put an end to so vicious an arrangement, desired to unite the three battalions already organised, and to form the divisions by regiments instead of battalions; an arrangement to the execution of which there was no cause for delay but the absence of the 3rd battalions, which, however, would be speedily available, when all the regiments would amount to four battalions. Marshal Davout formed of the regiments placed under his command four excellent divisions, and Marshal Victor three, and whilst their organisation was being completed, Napoleon determined the several positions they were to occupy, and duties they were to perform. That of Marshal Victor, which had hitherto remained in the rear, he marched upon the frontier line determined by the terms of the armistice, and cantoned it along the Oder, in the environs of Crossen; but with respect to that of Marshal Davout, considering that when reinforced by the Danes it would be more than sufficiently strong for the Hanseatic departments and the Lower Elbe, he determined to divide it into two parts, leaving two of its divisions under Marshal Davout, and posting two under General Vandamme, at Wittenberg, from whence he might bring them under his own immediate command, if necessary, or march them upon the Lower Elbe should Marshal Davout require them.

The other corps destined to reinforce the mass of the active troops were being reorganised at Mayence, and the reorganisation of four divisions which Napoleon intended to place under the command of Marshal St. Cyr had already made considerable progress. There were consequently three *corps d'armée*, Marshal Victor's, General Vandamme's, and Marshal St. Cyr's, comprising about eighty thousand infantry, with which Napoleon intended to swell the mass of his troops in Saxony, ready to meet the forces of Austria should they appear on the theatre of war. Besides the four divisions already almost organised at Mayence, Napoleon had assembled the elements of two others, which were to be organised under the care of Marshal Augereau, and be joined by the two Bavarian divisions. The Bavarian court, which had for a moment inclined, as had also Saxony, towards the mediatorial policy of Austria, had immediately renounced it when required to make on the banks of the Inn sacrifices for which it was to receive no compensation. It had

hastened to renew its armaments, and it could be relied on to furnish two serviceable divisions—serviceable, however, only in case victory should come to keep in check the excitement of the popular mind, and encourage the monarch to preserve his fidelity towards us. These four divisions, two French and two Bavarian, were to threaten Austria in the direction of the Haut Palatinat.

Finally, Napoleon had watched with his accustomed attention the execution of the orders given to Prince Eugène; by means of which he hoped to effect the reorganisation in Italy of an army of sixty thousand men, to whom he desired to add twenty thousand Neapolitans. Murat, always oscillating between the most opposite opinions, deeply hurt by the manner in which he had been treated by Napoleon, anxious to save his crown at any price, but unable to determine whether an alliance with France or with Austria would most conduce to the attainment of this object, had hitherto delayed to send his contingent; but Napoleon had scarcely entered Dresden when he had summoned him to decide upon the course he intended to pursue, at the same time directing M. Durand de Mareuil, the French minister at Naples, to withdraw, should the Neapolitan corps not receive immediate orders to march. There remained in the dépôts what would suffice to furnish six or seven thousand light cavalry to the future army of Italy; and the arsenals and dépôts of this country still contained the elements of an excellent artillery. Napoleon flattered himself, therefore, that by the 1st of August he would have an army of eighty thousand men, accompanied by two hundred pieces of cannon, threatening an invasion of Austria by Illyria.

The three corps of Victor, of Vandamme, and of St. Cyr (without taking into account that of Augereau, which was not intended to act upon the Elbe) appeared to him to be in themselves almost a sufficient protection against the appearance of Austria on the theatre of the impending struggle. But Poniatowski's corps, after many vicissitudes, brought across Galicia and Bohemia to Zittau, on the line on which was encamped our Silesian corps, was an additional resource, of which the real importance was less due to the number than to the quality of the troops of which it was composed. Of all our troops, none were braver, more warlike, more devoted to France. Of their country, there remained but the remembrance and the desire to avenge it; and Napoleon was resolved to give them a new country by making them the children of France, and taking them into her service. In the meantime, whilst awaiting their definitive incorporation with the French army, he placed them under the direct administration of M. de Bassano, directing this minister to satisfy their arrears of pay, to provide them with clothing, arms, and all, in short, that they might

re<sup>4</sup>hire. Independent of Dombrowski's corps, or the various detachments of their countrymen distributed amongst the fortifications, they numbered about twelve thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry, and were a fresh addition to the forces which had fought at Lutzen and Bautzen.

Finally, amongst the resources created for the purposes of the autumn campaign, and for the eventuality of a war with Austria, must be reckoned the development now given to the imperial guard, which had been composed at the commencement of the campaign of but two divisions, the one the old, and the other the young guard; but which was increased at the moment of the signature of the armistice by a 3rd division, whilst a 4th and a 5th were about to join it. It would thus, with twelve thousand cavalry and one hundred pieces of cannon, form a corps numbering almost fifty thousand men, of whom thirty thousand would be young infantry, whom Napoleon intended to expose much more freely than the old guard, making use of them in all the great battles, of which there were to be, unfortunately, both many and sanguinary ones.

It remained to provide for the reorganisation of the cavalry, of which there had been a great want at the commencement of the campaign, and which had been one of Napoleon's reasons for signing the armistice. The two corps of Latour-Maubourg and Sebastiani did not number at the beginning of June more than eight thousand horsemen. Four thousand might be drawn from the dépôts of General Bourcier, and about twenty-eight thousand from France; and by this means the cavalry arm of the army in Germany would be raised to the number of forty thousand, without taking into account the cavalry of the imperial guard and the allies, the Saxons, Wurtembergians, and Bavarians. Of the twenty-eight thousand expected from France, however, some would arrive on foot, and would have to be provided with horses; and with respect to the supply of horses required for his cavalry, Napoleon had an article inserted in the treaty of alliance by which Denmark became definitively attached to France; by which article France engaged, on her part, to keep a body of twenty thousand troops always at Hamburg, for the purpose of being ready to hasten when it might be necessary to the defence of the Danish provinces, whilst Denmark, on her side, undertook to furnish the French army with ten thousand infantry and two thousand horse, all of whom were to be paid by the French treasury, and to procure for it ten thousand horses, receiving immediately their value in ready money. Napoleon had reason to suppose, therefore, that by these means he would be able within two or three months to form a body of cavalry which, including the ten or twelve thousand troopers of the guard and the eight or ten

thousand of the allies, would number sixty thousand. Of the light cavalry, or cavalry of the line, Napoleon annexed about two thousand to each corps of the army, to serve the purpose of a corps of observation, and formed the remainder, as was his custom, into several reserve corps, intended to fight in line. Of these corps, Generals Latour-Maubourg and Sebastiani were already in command of two, which had made the spring campaign. The 3rd, which was now employed in pursuing the Cossacks, was under the command of the Duke of Padua; and at the head of the 4th was the Count de Valmy, the son of the old Duke de Valmy.

To these four corps Napoleon was anxious to add a 5th, to be formed of the regiments recalled from Spain. As the principal occupation of the cavalry in Spain—that of connecting together the several bodies of French troops—had become much less necessary since he had ordered the evacuation of Madrid, and the concentration of all the French forces in the north of the Peninsula, he had now recalled from thence the cadres of ten regiments of dragoons, four of chasseurs, and two of hussars, directing that they should be immediately conveyed to Mayence, where they were to be filled up with men of the last conscriptions, now already tolerably well disciplined. Napoleon hoped by this means to obtain about four or five thousand more cavalry, and thus to raise the strength of this arm of his forces to a total of sixty-five thousand men. Nor did he, whilst thus making these exertions to complete the organisation of his infantry and cavalry, neglect to bestow equal care upon the artillery, of which he hoped to be able to carry a thousand pieces actually into the field.

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Established, by means of the measures above narrated, on the line of the Elbe, Napoleon flattered himself that he would have at his disposal, without taking into account the troops in garrison, four hundred thousand soldiers, besides twenty thousand in Bavaria and eighty thousand in Italy, which would raise his total force to five hundred thousand active troops, and seven hundred thousand if we include those not actually in the field—an enormous force, which was quite sufficient in his powerful hand for the subjection of the coalition, even if strengthened by the addition of Austria, and for the development of which he had consented to an armistice, which afforded to the allies time to escape his pursuit, and also, unfortunately, time to augment considerably their forces.

The answer sent to M. de Metternich on the 15th of June had been interpreted rightly, the clever Austrian diplomatist understanding perfectly well that when, of forty days which remained for the negotiation of a general peace, five had been lost in replying to the note constitutive of the mediation, inde-

pendently of those which would be lost in settling mere questions of form, it might fairly be concluded that there was no very earnest desire to arrive at a pacific conclusion of the existing complications. Nevertheless, as it was possible that Napoleon might be merely unwilling to declare his real intentions until the last moment, or might really be sincere with respect to some of the difficulties which he had raised, M. de Metternich did not yet resign the hope that peace might still be obtained, either on the basis of the conditions proposed by Austria, or on others which should be moulded upon them. In either case he considered that he ought to await Napoleon's movements, whilst at the same time employing some method by which they might be stimulated. The two monarchs of Prussia and Russia were eager for an interview with the Emperor Francis, hoping that it might be the means of enabling them to engage him to what they called the cause of Europe; but the latter, considering himself bound, as well in his paternal as in his mediatorial character, to maintain extreme reserve with respect to two sovereigns who had become the implacable enemies of France, was unwilling to enter into any personal communication with them so long as circumstances should leave him at liberty to refrain from declaring war against this country. The same reasons did not apply, however, to the case of M. de Metternich, and he had accordingly proceeded to Oppontschna for the purpose of conferring with the two allied sovereigns; intending to make use of this opportunity to persuade them to adopt his own views. He set out on this journey with all publicity, being certain, as the event proved, that Napoleon, as soon as he should hear that the Austrian minister was engaged in personal conference with the two allied sovereigns, would experience a strong feeling of jealousy, and so far from objecting to his paying a visit to Dresden, would rather earnestly press him to do so.

Whilst M. de Metternich was on his journey, Prussia and Russia were entering into a subsidy treaty with England. By this treaty, concluded on the 15th of June, and signed by Lord Cathcart, M. de Nesselrode, and M. de Hardenberg, England undertook to furnish immediately to Russia and Prussia two millions sterling, and to liquidate the moiety of an emission of paper money, known by the name of *papier federative*, and intended to have currency through all the allied States. As this paper money would amount to five millions sterling, the total sum furnished by England to the two powers would amount to four and a half millions sterling (one hundred and twelve millions five hundred thousand francs), these powers engaging in return to maintain constantly in the field, in Russia one hundred and sixty thousand, in Prussia eighty thousand, active troops, to carry on



a vigorous war against the common enemy of Europe, and to refrain from entering into any treaty with him without having first concerted with England. The Russian and Prussian sovereigns having informed Lord Cathcart that they were summoned by Austria to accept her mediation, and that they were disposed to do so, provided it would not be an infraction of the subsidy treaty, Lord Cathcart replied that he did not consider that their acceptance of the mediation of Austria would be any infringement of this treaty, and added his opinion that it was necessary to comply with the views of Austria, since it was very probable that the conditions of peace proposed by her would be rejected by Napoleon, and she would thus be led into declaring war against him by the very act of mediation by which she had endeavoured to bring about a general peace.

On his arrival at Oppontschna, M. de Metternich was overwhelmed by caresses and solicitations on the part of the allied sovereigns and their ministers; who declared to him that their forces were immense, that if Austria should join them they would be irresistible, that Napoleon would be vanquished and Europe saved. Peace with Napoleon, they added, was impossible, for he was evidently unwilling to make it, and even if he did, it would only be with the intention of taking the field again as soon as he should have recruited his strength. These points of view, however, were not and could not be those from which Austria regarded the existing state of affairs. She was neither, as Russia, intoxicated with the idea of being the liberator of Europe, nor reduced, as Prussia, to the alternative of victory or destruction, nor driven, as was the case with England, to the shelter of all the consequences of a disastrous war. Her political and domestic relations with France, moreover, were strong motives for not entering into a state of hostility with this country without the most urgent motives for so doing. She was anxious to re-establish the independence of Europe without having recourse to a war which she regarded as full of perils, even if waged against Napoleon when enfeebled, and was of opinion that it was necessary to seize any opportunity of concluding an advantageous and secure peace, and to avoid the risk of losing all by endeavouring to gain too much at a single stroke. If, for example, Napoleon should be willing to renounce his Polish dream (as was styled his Grand Duchy of Warsaw), if he should consent to re-establish Prussia in her former condition, to restore independence to Germany by the abolition of the Confederation of the Rhine, and to restore her commerce by resigning the Hanseatic towns, it would be better to accept a peace based on these conditions than to encounter the risks of a formidable war. Should England be disinclined to adopt this view, it would be necessary to force her to do so by intimating

that she would otherwise be left to carry on the war alone. Such were the opinions of Austria; opinions which Prussia and Russia, under the influence of the passions of the moment, were far from sharing—desiring, as they did, that far harder terms should be exacted from France. She should be deprived of Westphalia and Holland, they said, and a portion of Italy at least should be taken from her and bestowed upon Austria. M. de Metternich rejoined, that whilst considering these views perfectly reasonable, Austria would confine herself to demanding the abandonment of the Duchy of Warsaw, the reconstitution of Prussia, the abolition of the Confederation of the Rhine, and the restoration of the Hanseatic towns, and would only declare war in case these conditions were rejected.

The result of the conferences between the Austrian minister and the allied sovereigns was, that the latter accepted the Austrian mediation, agreeing to enter into negotiations with Napoleon through the Austrian minister; that it was arranged that Austria should submit to the French court the conditions she proposed as the basis of peace, that she should only declare war in case they were rejected, that until then she should remain neutral, and that, with respect to England, she should be informed of the existing position of affairs, but that the question of peace between her and France should be adjourned for the purpose of simplifying the negotiation of a continental peace, which would necessarily and immediately be followed by a maritime one.

These bases of negotiation having been agreed upon, M. de Metternich returned to Gitschin, to his master, and found on his arrival there that his anticipations had been completely verified. Napoleon, in fact, full of anxiety with respect to what was taking place in Bohemia, knowing that continual communications were taking place between Gitschin, where his father-in-law was residing, and the headquarters of the allied sovereigns, and knowing also that there was every probability of personal interviews taking place between them and M. de Metternich at Oppontschna, began to consider that it was not altogether necessary, in his anxiety to procure delay, to afford the opportunity for the formation of a formidable coalition, which, by interfering at the right moment, he might be able to prevent. By means of a personal interview with M. de Metternich, he flattered himself that he should be able to discover what were the designs of the coalition, which would be an advantage of no slight importance, and more especially to contrive a fresh prolongation of the armistice. He had an intimation, therefore, given to M. de Bubna through M. de Bassano, that he would willingly receive M. de Metternich at Dresden, and that he even considered his presence necessary

for the complete comprehension of the questions which now had to be solved. M. de Bubna immediately transmitted this intimation to Gitschin, and M. de Metternich found it there on his return from his interview with Alexander and Frederick William. As this was precisely what both he and the Emperor Francis desired, M. de Metternich determined to accept the invitation without delay, and immediately set out for Dresden, bearing with him a letter written by the Emperor Francis to his son-in-law, in which he declared that he had authorised his minister of foreign affairs to sign all articles relating to the negotiation of the treaty of alliance, and the acceptance by France of the Austrian mediation; at the same time reiterating his entreaties that Napoleon would adopt a peaceful policy, and thus crown himself with the best species of glory, and the only kind which he had not yet grasped.

M. de Metternich arrived at Dresden on the 25th of June, and on the following day, the 26th, had a first interview with M. de Bassano, since it was with this minister that he was ostensibly to treat. Two days were spent by the two ministers in discussing empty quibbles respecting the treaty of alliance—which was to continue unbroken, but was to be temporarily suspended, so that the rôle of mediation might be rendered consistent with that of ally—respecting the form in which the arbitration was to be conducted, respecting the claim set up by the arbitrating power to be the sole channel through which the arbitration was to be conducted. As, however, M. de Metternich had not visited Dresden for the purpose merely of having interviews with a minister who had no real influence, and as he had, moreover, to deliver a letter from the Emperor Francis to the Emperor Napoleon, it was necessary that he should see the latter, and that without any further delay; and Napoleon was on his side equally ready for an interview, although the presence of M. de Metternich raised the heat of his wrath against Austria to a raging fever. The interview was appointed to take place on the afternoon of the 28th of June.

As M. de Metternich traversed the ante-chambers of the Marcolini Palace, he found them filled with foreign ministers and officers of all ranks; amongst them being Prince Berthier, who was extremely anxious for peace, and who, afraid to express his real feelings to Napoleon, was too prone to make them known to just those persons from whom it might have been wiser to conceal them. On the appearance of M. de Metternich, a species of anxiety was visible on the countenances of all those present; and Prince Berthier, whilst conducting him to the emperor's apartment, said to him—"Well! is it peace? . . . Pray, be reasonable, and put an end to this

war, for assuredly both you and we have equal need of repose!" By these words M. de Metternich could judge that his spies had reported truly, when they said that throughout France peace was earnestly desired, and was longed for even in the ranks of the French army. When M. de Metternich entered Napoleon's cabinet, he found him standing, his sword by his side, his hat under his arm, and wearing an air which was formally polite and seemed to be that of a man who was restraining his passion for a moment, but would be unable to do so much longer. "You have come at last, then, M. de Metternich," he said, as the Austrian minister entered—"you have come at last, but it is somewhat late, is it not?" And then adopting at once the tone agreed on in the French cabinet, he endeavoured, by being the first to describe the existing posture of affairs, to attribute to Austria the causes of the delay which had already taken place; at the same time complaining bitterly of the manner in which the Austrian court had behaved towards him, considering the relations which existed between them, and enlarging at great length upon the little dependence which it was possible to place upon Austrian good faith. "I have thrice," he said, "restored his throne to the Emperor Francis, and have even committed the error of marrying his daughter, in the hope, which has proved to have been but too vain, of rendering him my sincere ally. Last year, relying upon his good faith, I concluded a treaty of alliance with him, by which I guaranteed to him the possession of his States, and he guaranteed to me the possession of mine. Had he expressed any unwillingness to enter into this agreement, I should not have insisted upon his doing so, and I should have refrained from engaging in the Russian war. But now, after having signed this treaty, because a single campaign has been rendered disastrous to me by the unpropitious state of the elements, he begins to withdraw from the course he appeared to have warmly adopted, and interferes between me and my enemies, not, as he would have it supposed, for the purpose of negotiating a peace, but in reality to check me in a career of victory, and to rescue from my grasp the enemies I am about to destroy. . . . If you are anxious to renounce my alliance," he continued, throwing more and more animation into his voice and manner, "if it is injurious to you, leading you against your will into a state of hostility with the rest of Europe, why not have said so at once? I should not have insisted upon your adopting a course to which you were opposed; your neutrality would have sufficed me, and at this moment the coalition would have been already dissolved. But the fact is, that under the pretence of bringing about peace by adopting the rôle of arbitrator, you have taken up arms; and now that

your armaments are completed, or nearly so, you assume the right of dictating to me conditions which are those of my enemies themselves, and behave, in short, in the manner of persons quite ready to declare themselves my enemies. Be frank. Do you wish to wage war with me? . . . If it be so, men are indeed incorrigible, and incapable of deriving any advantage from experience! . . . The Russians and Prussians, in spite of many bitter lessons, have dared, emboldened by the events of last winter, to come forth to encounter my arms, and I have vanquished them, thoroughly vanquished them, although they have told you the contrary. And now you also wish to have your turn? Well! be it so, you shall have your wish. . . . I will meet you in Vienna, in October——”

The strange and contemptuous manner in which Napoleon alluded to a marriage with which in his private character he appeared to be by no means displeased, offended and irritated M. de Metternich, without, however, having as much impression upon him as would have been produced by a tone of cold firmness. “Sire,” replied he to Napoleon, “we do not desire to be at war with you, but we do desire to put an end to a state of things which has become intolerable to the nations of Europe, to a state of things which threatens all of us with some overwhelming destruction at any moment. Your majesty is as much interested as we can be in removing the evils which now prevail, for it is quite possible that fortune may some day be unpropitious to you, and should that be the case whilst affairs are in their present state, it is far from impossible that you should meet with some terrible misfortune.” “But what is it,” said Napoleon, “that you demand of me?” “Peace!” replied M. de Metternich, “that peace which is absolutely necessary, of which you have as much need as we, and the conclusion of which must afford as much safety to you as to us.” . . . And having said this, the Austrian diplomatist proceeded with infinite skill, rather insinuating than enunciating, to enumerate the conditions with which the reader is already acquainted. But as each condition reached his ears, Napoleon, as it were with a lion’s spring, dashed into the midst of the diplomatist’s discourse, as though he had just uttered some blasphemy or insult. “Oh!” he said, “I perceive what you mean. . . . You only ask of me just now, Illyria, that Austria may gain some ports; some portions of Westphalia and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw for the purpose of reconstituting Prussia; the cities of Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bremen, that the commerce of Germany may be re-established; and the renunciation by me of the protectorate of the Rhine—an empty title, as you call it—that German independence may once more exist! . . . But I know very well what all this really means. . . .

You Austrians want the whole of Italy; your friends the Russians are anxious to get hold of Poland; the Prussians long for the possession of Saxony; the English for that of Holland and Belgium; and if I yield to what you ask to-day, you will not fail to-morrow to demand these objects of your several desires. To obtain them, however, you must first raise an army of a million of men, spill the blood of many generations, and demand them at the foot of the heights of Montmartre!" . . . Whilst uttering these words, Napoleon lost all control over himself, and even permitted himself, it is said, to address M. de Metternich in the most insulting manner; but this the latter has always denied.

M. de Metternich now endeavoured to explain to Napoleon that such ideas were by no means now entertained, although it was by no means improbable that they might arise, should the war be imprudently prolonged, that there were doubtless some excitable persons in St. Petersburg, London, or Berlin, whom the events of 1812 had induced to indulge in them, but that there were none such in Vienna. "Justice," he said, "was all that was desired, and the best means of putting an end to the pretensions of the foolish persons just alluded to would be the conclusion of peace, of an honourable peace; of such a one, in fact, as that which Napoleon was now offered, and which would be to him both honourable and glorious." Somewhat soothed by these words, Napoleon replied, "That if the abandonment by him of a certain amount of territory had been alone required, he would have consented to make the sacrifice; but the coalition had been formed for the purpose of dictating conditions to him, and forcing him to accept them, and thus depriving him of his prestige." And then, with a burst of military pride which well became him, he added, "Your sovereigns, born to their thrones as they have been, cannot comprehend the sentiments which animate my breast. Vanquished, they return to their capitals, and are but little affected by what has taken place. But I am a soldier; honour and glory are necessities of my life; I can never suffer myself to appear humiliated in the midst of my people; I must and will remain great, glorious, and admired!" . . . "What end, then," interrupted M. de Metternich, "is there to be to the present state of affairs, if defeat and victory are equally to be reasons for continuing these calamitous conflicts?" . . . "What I do," replied Napoleon, "is not for myself alone, but for that brave nation which so readily sheds its noble blood at my summons. Such devotion forbids me to entertain any weak considerations with regard merely to my own welfare; it is my duty to preserve for France the greatness she has purchased by such heroic efforts." "But, sire," rejoined M. de Metternich, "this brave nation, whose courage all the

world admires, has need itself of repose. I have passed through the ranks of your regiments, and seen that your soldiers are mere children. You have anticipated your conscriptions, and called to arms a generation which has not yet arrived at manhood; and when this generation shall have been destroyed by the present war, will you levy that which shall be younger still?"

. . . These words, which repeated the reproach which was most frequently in the mouths of his enemies, touched Napoleon to the quick. Panting with an anger which distorted his features and deprived him of all control over himself, he threw, or let fall, his hat to the ground, which M. de Metternich did not attempt to pick up, and stepping close up to him, said—"You are not a soldier, sir; you have not, as I, a soldier's spirit; you have not lain in camps; you have not learned to regard as naught the lives of others as well as your own. . . . What do I care, do you suppose, for the lives of two hundred thousand men?" This outburst, the soldierly roughness of which we have suppressed, produced a great effect upon M. de Metternich, who exclaimed, "Let us open, sire, let us open all the doors and windows, that all Europe may hear you, and the cause I am defending with you may have the benefit of your words!" Recovering his composure to a certain extent, Napoleon said, with an ironical smile—"After all, the Frenchmen whose lives you are so anxious to defend have not so much reason to complain of me. I have lost, it is true, two hundred thousand men in Russia, of whom one-half were the finest French troops, whose loss I regret . . . oh! bitterly regret. . . . But with respect to the others, they were Italians, Poles, and chiefly Germans." . . . And as he concluded these words, he made a gesture which implied that their destruction was a matter of the most perfect indifference to him. "That is all very well," replied M. de Metternich, "but you must acknowledge that that is scarcely a reason to give to a German." "You spoke for the French, and I have answered you for them," replied Napoleon. The conversation having reached this point, the emperor employed an hour in relating to the Austrian diplomatist how he had been surprised and overcome in Russia by bad weather, and by bad weather alone. Not having seen M. de Metternich till now since the catastrophe of 1812, he took pains on this occasion to reassume in his eyes the prestige of invincibility, and to prove that all his losses had been simply due to the opposition of the elements. Walking quickly to and fro whilst he spoke, his foot happened to strike against his hat, which lay in one corner of the room, and he recurred to the fundamental idea of his discourse—which was, that Austria, in whose behalf he had so often remitted the punishment she had justly incurred, and from whom he had demanded—"thereby committing," he

said, "a great fault"—an archduchess in marriage, had nevertheless dared, in return for these favours, to take up arms against him. "A fault," interrupted M. de Metternich, "if the Emperor Napoleon were simply a conqueror, but not if he were a far-sighted politician and the founder of an empire." "Fault or no fault," exclaimed Napoleon, "the fact is, that you wish to declare war against me! Be it so, then. But what resources have you which will enable you to carry it on? Two hundred thousand troops in Bohemia, you say, as though you could make me believe such nonsense. At the very most you have no more there than one hundred thousand, and I am strongly inclined to believe that of those no more than eighty thousand are in a state to take the field." He then led M. de Metternich into his cabinet, showed him his memoranda and maps, told him that M. de Narbonne had covered Austria with his spies, that it was in vain, therefore, to attempt to frighten him, Napoleon, by mere fables, and that he knew for certain that the Austrian forces in Bohemia did not even amount to a hundred thousand. Passing from this subject, Napoleon said to M. de Metternich, "In truth, you had better refrain from mixing yourselves up with this quarrel, for the danger you would incur by so doing would far exceed any advantage you could hope to derive from it. You want Illyria? Well! I will let you have it. You are anxious for the conclusion of a European peace? I will conclude one that shall be perfectly just towards all. But as for the peace which you endeavour to bring about through your mediation, it is, in fact, a peace which you are striving to force me to accept, and submission to which would make me appear in the eyes of the world as one who had been vanquished, and was forced to accept such terms as might be offered him. And this, too, when I have just obtained two brilliant victories!" M. de Metternich referred once more to the plan of arbitration, endeavouring to point out to Napoleon that it was not proposed with a desire to place any constraint upon Napoleon's will, but simply in the friendly spirit of an ally, a friend, a father; and that it was tolerably certain that when the conditions suggested by it became generally known, they would be considered to show great partiality in the arbitrator for his son-in-law. "Oh! you persist, then," interrupted Napoleon, with anger, "you are determined to lay down the law to me? Well! We will have war, then! But remember! *We meet at Vienna!*"

This memorable interview, which did not, as we shall presently see, decide the question of peace or war, but which did display, in the most inopportune manner, what were Napoleon's real feelings on the subject, lasted five or six hours; the evening being so far advanced when it concluded that the speakers



could scarcely distinguish each other's countenances. Unwilling to dismiss M. de Metternich as in the midst of a quarrel, he added a few words in a much gentler tone, and then appointed fresh interviews for the following days. In the meantime, the habitués of the imperial ante-chamber had been much excited by the length of the interview; and the traces of anxious expectation on their countenances became still more visible when M. de Metternich reappeared amongst them. Major-General Berthier ran up to him to learn some tidings of what had taken place during the interview, and asked whether he were content with the emperor? "Yes!" replied the Austrian minister, "I am content with him, for he has set my conscience at rest, and on my oath, I believe your master has lost his reason."

It was not from the violence displayed during this interview that arose its injurious effect upon the fortunes of the empire, but from the sad conviction which it could not fail to leave upon the mind of M. de Metternich, that Napoleon would never consent to accept the moderate conditions which were the ultimatum of the Austrian cabinet. Fortunately, however, M. de Metternich, considering it indispensable to his own glory and security to obtain, by means of a peace, the conditions which he thought necessary, was ready to sacrifice his pride to his policy, and to restrain any display of passion so long as he should appear to have any chance of succeeding in his aim. Napoleon was at full liberty, therefore, to give way to his ill-humour, provided he should ultimately adopt a wise course and accept the favourable peace which was offered him. And we may add, moreover, that when any one had suffered from an outburst of his temper he received some prompt recompense, for whenever Napoleon had given way to a fit of ill-humour, he was ever ashamed of having done so, and speedily recovering himself, hastened to caress those whom he had just before insulted, and made every effort to induce them to forget what had taken place.

His interview with the Austrian minister had scarcely concluded when Napoleon was already filled with regret at having allowed to his passionate disposition such unrestrained sway, and thus failed to obtain from this interview any of the advantages he had hoped to make it afford. In fact, so far from having discovered the secrets of the Austrian minister, he had simply revealed his own, by making apparent the immovable obstinacy of his pride, and frustrating his chief design, that of procuring a prolongation of the armistice, by showing too clearly that the armistice would not lead to peace. He immediately, therefore, ordered M. de Bassano to hasten to M. de Metternich and enter into conversation with him on that essential topic, of which

but little had been said during the late interview, the Austrian mediation, its form, conditions, and the period at which it was to be exercised. And as M. de Metternich might even suppose from Napoleon's language that he had rejected it, M. de Bassano was now directed to draw up, in concert with him, a convention with respect to the manner in which it was to be executed.

The following day was accordingly devoted by M. de Metternich and M. de Bassano to a discussion respecting the mediation, nothing having been said respecting the treaty of alliance, the most important articles of which Austria had so ill advisedly been furnished with the opportunity of renouncing. The communication between the two diplomatists was solely upon the mediation, the manner of its execution, and the disposition which Austria would display towards France. An attempt was made to draw up a convention with respect to the form of the mediation; but no agreement could be come to, because M. de Bassano was anxious to surcharge it with precautions which M. de Metternich considered inconvenient. The details, however, were debated without bitterness, and in the tone of persons resolved to come to an understanding. The articles of the proposed convention agreed on between them were sent to the emperor, and it was arranged that on the 30th of June he should grant M. de Metternich another interview, for the purpose of coming to an agreement with him with respect to the still disputed points.

On the 30th, accordingly, M. de Metternich, accompanied by M. de Bassano, had a second conference with Napoleon, and found him as changed as a sky which a storm had just left serene. He was frank, cheerful, and full of amiable repentance. "You are determined to quarrel with us, then?" he said to M. de Metternich, in a tone of the most gracious familiarity; and then, taking the proposed convention out of the hands of M. de Bassano, he read the disputed articles, one after the other, exclaiming at the conclusion of each, without regard for the feelings of his minister, and as though M. de Metternich's opinions were his own, "But that is not common sense!" Then turning to M. de Bassano, he said to him, "Sit down and write," and dictated to him a form of convention which was as simple and clear as it could be, and entirely removed all the difficulties which had been raised. "Does this form satisfy you?" he then asked M. de Metternich. "Yes, sire," replied the illustrious diplomatist, "with the exception of some expressions." "Which?" asked Napoleon; and M. de Metternich having pointed them out, Napoleon altered them to his entire satisfaction. And thus, at length, the terms of this convention (which declared that with the desire of re-establishing at least a continental peace,

the Emperor of Austria had offered his mediation to the Emperor Napoleon; that the latter accepted it, and that the plenipotentiaries of the various powers were to meet at Prague, on the 15th of July at the latest) being settled, Napoleon, still speaking in the frank tone he had adopted from the commencement of the interview, said to M. de Metternich, "But this is not all; there must be a prolongation of the armistice; for how can we bring to an issue, between the 5th and 20th of July, a negotiation which must refer to the interests of the whole world, and which, to be thoroughly satisfactory, should rather be the work of years?" This question, which was an embarrassing one, would appear at first sight to admit of an answer only in the affirmative, and M. de Metternich, who was not unaffected by Napoleon's display of condescension throughout the interview, and was unwilling to compromise the mediation to which he attached so much importance for the sake of a few days, more or less, in the duration of the negotiations, replied, "That he hoped to be able to prevail upon the Prussians and Russians to agree to the prolongation of the armistice, although they were convinced that the armistice itself was injurious to them, and of service only to Napoleon; but he objected to allow it to be extended, as Napoleon wished, to the 20th of August, with six additional days for its denunciation, declaring that if the negotiations were conducted with good faith, they might be completed in a single day." To this Napoleon replied, "That forty days at least were necessary to enable him to judge of his adversaries' real intentions, and to declare his own. As for myself, you may be sure," he added, "that I shall not make known my real intentions until the fortieth day." "In that case," replied M. de Metternich, "the thirty-nine days preceding the fortieth will be useless." The conversation having taken this jocose turn, a settlement of the disputed point was evidently not far distant, and after some further discussion M. de Metternich appeared disposed to prolong the armistice to the 10th of August, with six days' notice of the renewal of hostilities, which would be a prolongation of twenty days—from the 26th of July to the 16th of August. Napoleon would have been glad to have obtained a still longer period in which to complete his preparations, but considering it prudent to make sure at least of the delay now offered, he declared that he accepted M. de Metternich's proposition, and a last article was added to the convention, to the effect that in consequence of the short time which now remained for negotiation, according to the terms of the armistice signed at Pleiswitz, the Emperor Napoleon engaged to refrain from denouncing this armistice until the 10th of August (the 16th of August in-

cluding the six days' notice), and that the Emperor of Austria undertook to obtain a similar engagement on the part of the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia. As Napoleon was anxious that this agreement should be signed immediately, he at once dismissed, overwhelmed with caresses, the Austrian minister, whom he had thus, by changing his lion-like for his siren aspect, known how to lead into compliance with his views, and induce to consent to the only arrangement he really desired, which was a prolongation of the armistice.

The true policy of the Austrian court, which so passionately desired the success of the mediation, would now have consisted in keeping Napoleon without a single pretext for loss of time, and with this view, informing him immediately that the convention constituting the mediation, and the prolongation of the armistice were accepted, and that the negotiators, as had been agreed, would meet punctually on the 5th of July. But unfortunately this course was not adopted. M. de Metternich, setting out from Dresden on the 30th of June, the very day of the signature of the convention, arrived at Gitschin on the 1st of July, giving great delight to his master by announcing to him that the mediation was accepted, since this circumstance removed the Austrian court from the very embarrassing position of an ally of France to the independent and powerful position of arbitrator between her and her enemies. M. de Metternich had no difficulty, therefore, in obtaining from the Emperor Francis the immediate ratification of the convention; but either because he had not clearly perceived Napoleon's purpose of procuring delay, or because he had to submit to actual difficulties, M. de Metternich himself now furnished pretexts for loss of time, by demanding that the meeting of the plenipotentiaries should be deferred from the 5th to the 8th of July. Having demanded this delay, he then addressed the sovereigns assembled at Reichenbach, for the purpose of announcing to them the acceptance of the mediation, as well as for the purpose of prevailing upon them to agree to the prolongation of the armistice, and to send without delay their plenipotentiaries to Prague.

The allied monarchs at Reichenbach had not, when signing the armistice of Pleiswitz, fully comprehended its nature. They had seen in it at first simply an advantageous means of avoiding the immediate consequences of the battle of Bautzen, without taking into consideration the advantages which it would also afford to Napoleon; but now that they had escaped from the peril of the moment, and beheld the daily development of Napoleon's armaments, they began almost to regret a suspension of arms which had saved them, and were by no means inclined to consent to its prolongation. There was another

circumstance, moreover, which rendered them averse to the prolongation to which M. de Metternich had agreed, and that was, that whilst Napoleon had the most fertile portion of Silesia from which to procure provisions, they had only the least fertile portion, and had reason to fear a failure of the means of subsistence for their troops. Moreover, amongst the Germans, and especially amongst the Prussians, every adjournment of hostilities was considered an additional step made by Austria in her pacific policy, and a species of treason. There would naturally, therefore, be some difficulty in inducing the allied sovereigns to consent to a protraction of the armistice; but as, on the other hand, they could not at this moment refuse anything that Austria might desire, they could not, by rejecting the prolongation of the armistice, declare that her engagement with Napoleon to procure thus its prolongation had been imprudent and fruitless. They consented, therefore, to this measure, but at the same time desired, in consideration of the time already lost, and the distances their plenipotentiaries would have to travel, that the day for their meeting at Prague should be the 12th instead of the 8th. M. de Metternich informed M. de Bassano of these arrangements, but with respect to the prolongation of the armistice expressed himself as though it were a matter of course, and refrained from communicating its official acceptance by the Prussian and Russian sovereigns.

Nothing could be more agreeable to Napoleon's plans than delays of which he was not himself the cause; but he replied to M. de Metternich on this occasion as though he rather submitted to than rejoiced at the further delay of which the latter had just informed him; directing M. de Narbonne, who filled at Prague, as at Vienna, the office of French ambassador, to express his regrets on this subject, and also to complain of the want of any official notification of the consent given to the prolongation of the armistice. He authorised him also to declare that when the Russian and Prussian negotiators should have set out for the place of meeting, France would appoint and despatch hers, and to hint that they would probably be MM. de Narbonne and de Caulaincourt.

Whilst making these communications Napoleon resolved to obtain by means of these delays, which the Austrian court had consented to aid him in obtaining, fresh delays, which he intended to make appear natural consequences of those of which he was not the cause. He had long since proposed to make several excursions for the purpose of making himself acquainted, as was his wont, with the places which were to be the theatre of war, and he was anxious, if time would allow, to traverse the banks of the Elbe from Königstein to Hamburg, and to go even to pass a few days at Mayence with the

empress, who was impatient to see him, and on whom he wished, moreover, to bestow public testimonies of affection, as a means of increasing the Austrian emperor's difficulty in ignoring the paternal bonds which united him with France. He now resolved to commence these excursions by that one of them which would enable him to inspect the important points of Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg, and by setting out before he could receive from Prague the communications which he complained of not having received, before he could be informed of the names of the plenipotentiaries appointed by the allied powers, the precise period at which they were to meet, and the formal acceptance of the prolongation of the armistice, to avoid the necessity of making his own reply until his return, and thus gain a delay of four or five days, which would appear to be the consequence of the loss of time from the 5th to the 12th of July. He suddenly declared, therefore, that having deferred his departure to the 9th, without having received any message from Prague, he found himself compelled by the urgent necessities of his army to set out from Dresden on the 10th. At the same time, however, that he might not afford his enemies the opportunity of carrying him off, in spite of the armistice, by a troop of Cossacks, he refrained from stating the direction in which he should proceed, and forbore also to say how long he should be absent, but intimated that he would not be away more than three days at the most.

On the morning of the 10th of July, accordingly, he set out in all haste for Torgau, and at the very moment of his departure, arrived in Dresden news of the latest events in Spain—events which, although they might have been foreseen, could not but be a surprise as agreeable for our enemies as painful for us, and have a disastrous influence upon the general posture of our affairs. And of these events it is proper that the reader should here be informed, so intimate is their political connection with those of which Germany was at this time the theatre.

After the junction of the three armies of the centre, Portugal, and Andalusia, the situation of the French in the Peninsula still offered fair chances of success. Marshal Suchet, maintaining his position by his most advanced corps at Valencia and by two other corps in Catalonia and Aragon, was master of that portion of Spain the possession of which was most essential to us; whilst Joseph was at Madrid with the army of the centre, having in front of him, spread along the Tagus from Tarançon to Almaraz, the army of Andalusia, and in his rear, on his right, between the Tormès and the Douro, the army of Portugal. In this position there was no reason for fear, if the forces recently concentrated should remain so, and thus be always ready to fall en masse upon the English upon their first appearance. In

January 1813 these three armies numbered about eighty-six thousand men.

Had it not been for the disastrous effect produced by the late events in Russia, the position of Joseph would have now been a tolerably favourable one; but these events had excited the public mind of Spain in a most remarkable manner, and renewed throughout the country the hope of being speedily freed from our rule.

The Cortes of Cadiz continued to direct, in a manner which was very wanting in method, indeed, but with the utmost enthusiasm, the affairs of the insurrectional movement in Spain, whilst Lord Wellington conducted, in a manner which was as well ordered as it was firm, that of Portugal. The Cortes had, as has been already narrated, put an end to their constitution, and copying exactly that which had been adopted by France in 1791, had arranged to have but a single government assembly, and a king whose power should consist only in a suspensive veto. In the meantime, until this king should be restored to them, the Cortes assumed that in themselves was embodied the entire sovereignty, adopted the title of majesty, and bestowed that of highness upon an elective regency composed of five members, and invested with the executive power in the absence of Ferdinand VII. And now the Cortes had opposed to them, besides the French and Joseph's few adherents, all the friends of the old régime which they had abolished, and found themselves engaged in a continual contest with the regency, which they regarded with suspicion, because it had been composed of the exalted personages of the Church and the army; circumstances which explain the fact that when Seville and the whole of Andalusia had been abandoned by the French, the Cortes still preferred to remain in Cadiz, having more confidence in the population of this city than in that of any other. Had the Russian disasters, had the defeat of Salamanca not occurred, Joseph, less thwarted and better provided with money, might have succeeded after a time in obtaining a large party through the divisions amongst the Spaniards themselves.

At this moment the disunion existing amongst them was much aggravated by the rise of a question relative to the command of the armies. The success of Lord Wellington, and the qualities which the Portuguese army had displayed under his command, had suggested to certain members of the Cortes the idea of offering him the command in chief of the Spanish troops, and this project, although at first receiving some degree of opposition from Spanish pride and jealousy, was ultimately adopted, and the post of generalissimo was conferred on Lord Wellington, who, having received the sanction of the English government to its acceptance, proceeded in the course of the

winter to Cadiz for the purpose of conferring with the regency upon all the questions which would naturally arise from his future command. But although received on his arrival with great distinction, he was at the same time attacked in such a manner by the journals, the organs of the national jealousy, that he more than once regretted having exposed himself to such treatment, and would even have resigned the command he had accepted, had he not feared that such a step would have been a disastrous blow to the insurrection. He had been endowed with almost all the authority he required, but he much feared that he should be unable to raise an effectual Spanish army from the want of money and officers. Money, indeed, he was promised by the Spanish officials, but they had no resources from which to supply it; and with respect to officers, it would have been useless for him to have attempted to supply this want by Englishmen, for the Spanish army, notwithstanding the example of the Portuguese army, would never have permitted foreigners to command them. He resolved, therefore, to devote his attention almost exclusively to the Spanish army of Galicia, which was to serve under his immediate orders.

Returning to Fresnada, on the northern frontier of Portugal, he employed all the winter in making preparations for the approaching campaign. His intention was to have about forty-five thousand English troops, thoroughly disciplined; twenty-five thousand Portuguese, and thirty thousand Spaniards, as well organised and equipped as circumstances might permit; and with this force to advance upon the north of the Peninsula, for the purpose of making a blow at the very root of the power of the French in Spain. As, however, the concentration of the three armies of Portugal, the centre, and the south, had assembled at Madrid a force of eighty or ninety thousand French troops, he regarded his proposed enterprise as a very hazardous one, and was unwilling to attempt it, save with the utmost circumspection, and on condition that the insurgents of Catalonia and Murcia, supported by the Anglo-Sicilian army, should make a strong diversion in his favour upon Valencia, whilst the English fleets, seconding the efforts of the guerillas of the Asturias and the Pyrenees, should afford continual occupation to our army of the north. Being consulted with respect to the project of an invasion of the south of France whilst Napoleon should be engaged with the war in Saxony, he replied that the first care of the English should be to force the French to repass the Pyrenees, and to propose to enter France only in their track.

These opinions of the British general commanding in chief sufficiently indicate that the course to be pursued by the French to render this campaign more fortunate than those which had



preceded it was to keep their armies concentrated, and then to determine on the position upon which it would be best to establish them. Unfortunately, the decision on the latter point was not very wisely made. Marshal Jourdan's opinion was, that since it was necessary to make head against the Anglo-Portuguese army in Old Castille, between Salamanca and Valladolid, it would be advisable to advance to Valladolid, retaining there only such matériel as might be requisite, despatching to Vittoria the sick and wounded, prisoners, and munitions of war. But although this opinion was thoroughly wise, it was urged by him, unfortunately, with but too little energy, and much was required to overcome Joseph's repugnance to evacuate Madrid. Since he had seen Lord Wellington fly before him, and had been able to re-enter his capital in triumph, he had persuaded himself that he was still King of Spain; and to propose to him now to leave Madrid was to propose to him to become once more a vagabond king, to restore to the Spaniards all the hopes they had lost, to drag once more along the highways a crowd of unhappy wretches whose fortunes were bound up with his own, and to deprive him of his revenue, which consisted of the octroi of Madrid, and of what could be collected from the two or three surrounding provinces. Nevertheless, Joseph's mind was too clear-sighted to have absolutely refused to contemplate the idea of quitting Madrid when Marshal Jourdan proposed it, and it is probable that if the latter had insisted upon it more strenuously this measure would have been adopted. In the meantime, the proposal remained in abeyance until the arrival of despatches from Paris, which would contain Napoleon's precise instructions relative to the conduct of the campaign.

We have already intimated Napoleon's feelings with respect to Spain in 1813. Disgusted at an enterprise which had deplorably divided his forces, he would have gladly withdrawn from it had he been able, but having drawn the English to the Peninsula, it was not in his power to relieve himself of them at his pleasure. By opening the gates of Valençay, for example, to Ferdinand VII., he would but have had the English at Toulouse or Bordeaux instead of at Burgos or Valladolid. It was necessary, therefore, to continue to contend with them beyond the Pyrenees, for the purpose of avoiding the necessity of having to carry on the struggle on this side of them. But, nevertheless Napoleon had, as we have already seen, reduced this task to its narrowest limits for the campaign of 1813, by diminishing his armies in Spain, and confining his plans to the preservation only of Old Castille, the Basque provinces, Catalonia, and Aragon. His secret intention was to treat with England on the basis of the restoration of Spain, minus the provinces of the Ebro, to Ferdinand VII., making compensation

for this diminution of territory by the gift of Portugal, which the house of Bragantia could afford to lose since it had found an asylum in the Brazils; and it is in this intention that may be discovered the secret cause of his having consented for the first time to admit the representatives of the Spanish insurrection to a congress.

In the meantime, disgusted at the fact that his couriers could not make the journey from Paris to Madrid under thirty or forty days, he resolved to re-establish a regular line of communications between the two countries at any price, and with this view gave orders that measures should be taken for the destruction of the guerilla bands which infested Navarre, Guipascoa, Biscaye, and Alava; and that these measures might be the more effectually carried out, desired that Joseph should evacuate Madrid, for the retention of which he cared little, since he had resolved to yield the Spanish crown to Ferdinand VII., and transfer his court to Valladolid, that he should then reclaim the French troops in Old Castille, bring up the army of Portugal from Burgos, and supply General Clausel with a large portion of it for the purpose of destroying the guerillas; that he should move back the army of Andalusia from Talavera to Salamanca, and the army of the centre from Madrid to Segovia, leaving at the most but one detachment in that capital, and that only that it might not appear to be definitively abandoned. And finally, he directed that an offensive attitude should be given to the army of Andalusia, for the purpose of leading the English to believe that we still entertained designs upon Portugal. In making these arrangements, with the hope that they would be the means of destroying the guerilla bands, and preventing the English from attempting any invasion of the south of France, Napoleon allowed himself, unfortunately, to fall under the influence of several illusions. In the first place, it was not probable that Lord Wellington could be induced to suppose that we had designs upon Lisbon at a time when we were compelled to evacuate Madrid; and moreover, there was no necessity to render him anxious with respect to Portugal for the purpose of retaining him in the Peninsula, since by vanquishing him in Castille, at Salamanca, at Valladolid, at Burgos, it mattered little where, we should at once throw him back once more behind the lines of Torres Vedras. But this great object was evidently compromised by placing the army of Portugal at the disposal of General Clausel for the purpose of the destruction of the guerilla bands of the north of Spain, whilst at the same time it was very doubtful whether the troops thus placed at this general's disposal would be sufficient to enable him to carry into effect the proposed design.

Napoleon's instructions, transmitted through the minister

of war in the month of January, and reiterated in February, could not reach their destination the first time until the middle of February, the second until the beginning of March, that is, thirty days after they had been despatched, a loss of time which was much to be regretted, and which was a necessary consequence of the occupation of all the routes by the bands of insurgents. It was very painful to Joseph, as we have before said, to abandon Madrid, but his own reason and Marshal Jourdan's advice had already shown him that it was necessary to make this sacrifice when Napoleon's orders arrived, and they did but serve to lead him at once to put into execution a resolution already adopted.

When the removal from Madrid to Valladolid had been effected—which was not until the beginning of April—the troops were distributed in the following manner. The army of Portugal was transferred from Salamanca to Burgos, and was reduced, by the dismissal of all but the actually effective troops, from eight divisions to six, of which three were sent to General Clausel to aid in putting down the guerilla bands, whilst one was retained at Burgos, and the remaining two were echeloned in advance of Palencia ready to support the cavalry posted along the Esla, and in a position to watch the Spanish army of Galicia. The army of Andalusia, transported from the valley of the Tagus to that of the Douro, and connecting itself by its right with the army of Portugal, occupied the Douro and the Tormès, ready to make head against the Anglo-Portuguese army encamped in Le Beira. Its divisions occupied Zamora, Toro, Salamanca, and Avila; but one of them, that of General Leval, was left at Madrid, for the purpose of continuing an apparent occupation of the capital, and receiving its revenues. Finally, one of the two divisions of the army of the centre was established at Valladolid itself, and the other at Segovia, in order to afford support to the division Leval, which remained *en l'air* in the midst of New Castille.

Had these three armies, which in January had numbered eighty-six thousand, but now numbered no more than seventy-two thousand men, been united into a single one under a single commander, such as General Clausel, who was as active in the battlefield as he was obedient to the royal staff, and had it been concentrated between Valladolid and Burgos for the purpose of repose, the repair of the matériel and the establishment of magazines, all might yet have been saved. But unfortunately this course was not adopted. The three armies were left separated, because Napoleon was unwilling that so large a force as that which they would have formed when concentrated should have been at Joseph's immediate disposal; the consequence was that the staff of each army resolved to maintain

its independence, and would not obey the orders of the general staff with respect to the formation of magazines until they received positive orders to do so from Paris; and as there was a month's delay in awaiting these orders, the most valuable time for the formation of the magazines was lost. Finally, after three divisions of the army of Portugal had been sent to General Clausel to aid in the destruction of the guerilla bands, it was found necessary to send him a fourth, and to march a fifth as far as Briviesca. Only one division, therefore, was left under the command of General Reille, and even that had to be divided, one of its brigades being posted at Burgos, the other at Palencia, behind the cavalry which guarded the Esla. There were consequently, should the Anglo-Portuguese troops suddenly arrive, but two of the three armies ready to oppose them; the advantages of the concentration of these armies after the unfortunate battle of Salamanca, which might have led to the re-establishment of our fortunes in the Peninsula, being already almost annulled. Had the reinforcements which were thus sent to General Clausel been sufficient, indeed, to enable him to destroy the guerilla bands, the ill effects of this fresh dispersion of our troops would not have been without compensation, but this Spanish Vendée was as difficult to put down as had been the French Vendée, and it had become evident that that object could never be effected by mere force without the aid of additional influences, as well moral as political.

Supported by the English vessels of war, Porlier, Campillo, Longa, Mina, and Merino, sometimes united, sometimes separated, but always well informed of all they could require to know, avoided our columns when they were in force, attacked them when they had separated in the hurry of pursuit, and manœuvred in such a manner that although General Clausel had 50,000 men with whom to oppose them, and pursued them with the greatest activity, he could seldom come up with them, and scarcely ever succeeded in keeping open the communications.

Whilst the troops, which were the last means of making head against the English, were exhausted in the useless pursuit of these guerillas, the months of April and May passed by, and the moment for extensive operations having arrived, Lord Wellington quitted his cantonments, entering upon the campaign with 48,000 English troops, 20,000 Portuguese, and 24,000 Spaniards, the latter being better armed and equipped than usual. His intention was to cross the Esla with his left, which was under the command of Sir Thomas Graham, and to refrain from attacking with his centre and right the line of the Douro until his left should have gained a position, by crossing the Esla, in the rear of the French troops by whom the Douro was defended.

On the 11th of May his left executed its first movement and spread along the Esla, and as General Reille's cavalry, being supported but by one brigade of infantry, was not in a position in which it could display either hardihood or vigilance, it could neither know of nor prevent the passage of this river by the English troops, which, however, did not hasten to advance against us, since one wing was unwilling to march without the other; and it was not till the 20th of May that Lord Wellington moved with his right upon Salamanca and the Tormès. On the 24th, General Gazan was informed of his advance at the head of considerable forces.

The French army, which ought to have been prepared and concentrated on the 1st of May in the environs of Valladolid, now found itself surprised in the most unfavourable of positions. Had Marshal Jourdan been a younger man, and Joseph a more active and determined one, it is probable that they would have kept themselves more clearly informed of the movements of the English, have recalled at the first approach of danger, in spite of the imperial orders, which after all were rather instructions than orders, those divisions of the army of Portugal which had been sent to General Clausel, or at least have concentrated more thoroughly the troops actually at their disposal; and finally, in spite of the opposition of the several staffs, have formed at Burgos those magazines without which it was impossible, in such a country as they now were, to manœuvre with any degree of freedom. But Jourdan, disgusted with a régime and a war of which he had long since foreseen the deplorable consequences, bending beneath the effects of old age, and anxious only to return to France, did little more than point out the faults which were committed; whilst Joseph, perceiving clearly the error of the existing system, and frequently enraged at the course his brother pursued, still knew not how to disobey him, or to assume, as general and king, that authority for the assumption of which he certainly could not have been punished.

And thus it was that Lord Wellington, advancing on the 11th of May with his left, and on the 20th of May with his right, found the army of Andalusia dispersed from Madrid to Salamanca; that of the centre, from Segovia to Valladolid; that of Portugal, from Burgos to Pampeluna.

On the 25th orders were sent to the division Leval to evacuate Madrid, and to fall back upon Valladolid, orders at the same time being sent to all the troops on the lines of the Tormès, the Douro, and the Esla, to retreat slowly, so as to afford time to the division Leval to fall back; and as General Reille had only one of the two brigades of the division Maucune for the support of his cavalry, one of the divisions of the army of the

centre (Darmagnac's) was now placed at his disposal. The remainder of the army of the centre was left echeloned upon Segovia, for the purpose of awaiting the division Leval. The army of Andalusia, the most complete of the three, was to retreat from Salamanca upon Tordesillas, falling back very slowly, so as to afford time for the concentration of all our dispersed troops. To these measures, which were rendered necessary by the posture of affairs, was added the despatch of a message to General Clausel, informing him of the approach of the English, desiring him to send back the five divisions of the army of Portugal, and urging him to come to Valladolid himself with some troops of the army of the north, so as to raise the force by which the English were to be opposed to eighty thousand men. Finally, a despatch was sent to Clarke, the minister of war, informing him of the state of affairs, and entreating him to exert himself to the utmost for the concentration of the French forces. This minister, remaining alone in Paris since Napoleon's departure for Germany, contented himself with blindly repeating Napoleon's orders, and but a few days before the appearance of the English, had ordered that another division of the army of Portugal should be sent to Aragon, for the purpose of keeping open the communications with Marshal Suchet. But little assistance, therefore, was to be expected of the Duke de Feltre, save the transmission by him to General Clausel of information of the approach of the English—a service which might possibly be of no little value, since the interrupted state of the communications between the army of the north and Valladolid might prevent his receiving the news from thence until after the lapse of three or four weeks.

Having rallied his cavalry, General Reille retreated in good order upon Palencia, and with the infantry divisions Maucune and Darmagnac secured from attack the route from Valladolid to Burgos, which was our army's line of retreat; at the same time General Villatte, posted on the Tormès, defended it valiantly, and by these means, and by Lord Wellington's prudent slowness of movement, General Leval was enabled without loss to evacuate Madrid and repass the Guadarrama in safety, carrying with him the last remains of our establishment in the capital, and joining the army of the centre at Segovia. On the 2nd of June our troops held the following positions: General Reille was between Rio-Seco and Palencia, with his cavalry and two divisions; the army of Andalusia at Tordesillas on the Douro, with its four divisions; and finally, the army of the centre at Valladolid, with a French division and a Spanish division—a total force of about fifty-two thousand men.

Our troops being now grouped around Valladolid, there were three courses open to them. The first, to await and engage

the enemy, which would have been imprudent, since the latter were ninety thousand strong, and since every retrograde step on our part added to our chance of being joined by one or more of the divisions of the army of Portugal. The second, to retreat upon Burgos, Miranda, and Vittoria, until joined by the army of the north. The third, to remain on the line of the Douro, and to manœuvre on this stream, ascending it as far as Aranda, or even as far as Soria, from whence a route which Marshal Ney had followed in 1808 would lead us to a point between Tudela and Logrono at which we might be certain of meeting with General Clausel and even Marshal Suchet, should extraordinary events require the general concentration of all our forces. These projects were taken into consideration and discussed, and the choice fell upon the second, which consisted in a peaceable retreat upon Burgos, letters being at the same time despatched to General Clausel, requiring him to restore the divisions of the army of Portugal which had been placed at his disposal.

This retreat accordingly commenced, and as Madrid had been abandoned, so now it became necessary to abandon Valladolid, that second capital which we had created in Old Castille. As we had, fortunately, ten thousand excellent cavalry, and as the enemy was not very enterprising, we were enabled to effect our retrograde movement without any disastrous incident. Lord Wellington, indeed, awaiting but not pursuing fortune, knew that a general engagement was inevitable, but at the same time resolved, as was his wont, not to fight except on ground favourable to himself, and appeared to be content for the present with driving us back towards the Pyrenees. It is difficult to understand, however, how so keen-sighted a general should hasten, on his own part, to drive us upon our reinforcements rather than endeavour to engage us, when instead of seventy thousand men our army numbered but fifty thousand.

On the 6th of June our troops reached the environs of Palencia, and a reconnaissance executed by Joseph and Jourdan made them thoroughly aware that the plan of the English was to make their reinforced left press continually upon our right. On the 9th the retreat had continued as far as Burgos, which place the failure of provisions had made it desirable to reach as speedily as possible, but from which a similar cause made it equally necessary to retreat without delay; for the numerous convoys of sick, of *expatries* and artillerymen accumulated at Burgos, had eaten up the scanty supplies of provisions which had been formed there, and scarcely sufficient remained for the support of the troops even for a few days. These convoys were now again removed, being carried to Miranda and Vittoria; and this was a mistake, for the resolution to retreat to the Pyrenees

having been once adopted, all that could embarrass the army should have been sent to Bayonne. A delay of a few days was made at Burgos, for the purpose of consuming the provisions which still remained there, and of affording time for the concentration of the scattered troops; and indeed, as the division Lamartinière, which was the largest division of the army of Portugal, and had been lent to the army of the north, was found here, and increased General Reille's troops by six thousand men, he was enabled to restore to the army of the centre the division Darmagnac, which had been temporarily borrowed from it.

Before quitting Burgos the course which should be pursued was again discussed, and it was debated whether the army should follow the great Bayonne route, in accordance with the orders which had directed the re-establishment of the communications with France, or whether it should not rather effect a transverse movement, so as to debouch upon the Ebro at Logrono, instead of arriving there by Miranda—a course which would almost certainly lead to a junction with General Clausel. This plan was earnestly supported by Generals Reille and d'Erlon, but Marshal Jourdan and Joseph persisted in proceeding directly upon Miranda and Vittoria; and as no news had been received with respect to General Clausel, they sent him, this time under the escort of fifteen hundred men, information of the approach of the army in the direction of Vittoria. The course which was adopted was, then, that of retreating upon the Ebro by Briviesca, Pancorbo, and Miranda.

On the 12th of June, General Reille, finding that the English were again attempting to outflank our right, wished to force them to deploy their forces, and kept in the rear of the Rio Hormaza. The English displayed a force of about twenty-five thousand men; but General Reille, who had not half that number, manœuvred with so much *aplomb* and vigour that he succeeded in slaying three or four hundred of them, with a loss to himself of not more than fifty, and repassed the Rio Hormaza, and even the Arlanzon, in perfect order. It was evident that the English, without being anxious to give us battle, were determined to make us yield ground by continually outflanking one of our wings. On the 13th it was resolved to march from Burgos, and as it was known that Lord Wellington was now provided with a powerful siege train, and as, moreover, our army could not afford to leave two or three thousand men behind for its defence, it was determined to destroy this fortress, together with the munitions of war with which it was filled, and which it would be impossible to carry away. On the 13th, accordingly, whilst on its march upon Briviesca, the army was saddened by hearing a terrible explosion, which was the sign of a definitive retreat, and which,



being executed without the necessary precautions, caused, as well to our own troops as to the city, a considerable amount of injury.

On the 14th the French army arrived at Briviesca, on the 15th at Pancorbo, on the 16th at Miranda, at which last point it was on the brink of the Ebro, and within a step of Vittoria, at the very foot of the Pyrenees. In the meantime, the enemy had advanced by its left as far as Villarcajo, continuing its manœuvre of outflanking our right; but news was also received that General Clausel, immediately after receiving information of the approach of the English, had hastened to move towards the army the divisions Sarrut and Foy, and had himself advanced by Logrono with the two remaining divisions of the army of Portugal, and two divisions of the army of the north.

As General Clausel was expected to arrive at Logrono by the 20th, the most simple course to have now pursued would have been to have descended the Ebro from Miranda to Logrono, which would have involved a detour of a few leagues at the most, and have ensured the junction with the troops under this general's command. But Joseph and Jourdan were filled with fears lest the direct Bayonne route should be intercepted by the enemy; and two distinct opinions held possession of the staff, the one party proposing to direct the army by a transverse movement upon Logrono and Navarre, for the purpose of rallying General Clausel, without paying any attention to the movement of the English against our right, since it was not probable that they would entertain the idea of crossing the Pyrenees before they had gained over us some decisive victory; whilst the other party proposed, on the contrary, that extreme attention should be given to the movement by which the English threatened our communications, and to meet this movement by remaining on the great Bayonne route, and desiring General Clausel, who was every moment expected, to march his troops thither also. The first opinion was that of General Reille and the Count d'Erlon; the second that of Marshal Jourdan and King Joseph, who were fatally influenced by the orders sent from Paris.

The conflict between these two opinions was very vehement at Miranda, for the moment had arrived when it was necessary to choose between them. General Reille maintained that it was necessary to descend the Ebro as speedily as possible. He also maintained that as General Clausel had announced his arrival on the Ebro in the environs of Logrono, it was necessary to hasten to descend thither for the purpose of joining him, and that every consideration should yield to the great object of effecting the concentration of our forces, and repeated the opinion he had always held, that the movement by which the English

endeavoured to outflank us was not a serious menace, so long as they should not have really vanquished us. Marshal Jourdan and Joseph, on the contrary, feared above all things a movement on the part of the English, which, by leading them by Orduna upon Bilbao and Tolosa, should place them between us and Bayonne, on the other side of the great chain of the Pyrenees. Moreover, as the convoy comprising the sick and wounded, and the Spaniards who accompanied our retreat from Madrid, was now at Vittoria, to descend upon Logrono would be to leave it unprotected, and to surrender it into the hands of the enemy; and finally, as Vittoria had been named to General Clausel as the place of rendezvous, he might very probably proceed thither without visiting Logrono, in which case our descent upon this latter place would leave him as much exposed to danger as the convoy.

It must be acknowledged that the advice given by General Reille and the Count d'Erlon, although the better, as we shall presently see, had lost much of its apparent merit since the convoy had been sent to Vittoria, and General Clausel had been directed to proceed thither, for, setting aside the alleged fear of being turned by Orduna, the danger of leaving the convoy, and even General Clausel himself, entirely exposed, by descending obliquely upon Logrono, was a very specious inducement to continue to march directly upon Vittoria.

Whilst adopting the direct line of march upon Vittoria, Joseph and Marshal Jourdan were also anxious to preserve themselves from any danger of being turned by Orduna and Bilbao, and ordered General Reille to advance by Puente-Larra upon Osma, and by Osma upon Orduna and Bilbao, whilst the rest of the army advanced immediately upon Vittoria. They hoped to be joined at Vittoria by General Clausel, the junction of whose troops would afford an accession of strength greater than that which had been lost by the departure of General Reille, and resting thus upon the Pyrenees, with Generals Gazan, d'Erlon, and Clausel, whilst General Reille should be on the other side of these mountains, to oppose the enemy in every direction with a barrier of fire. But whilst making these arrangements, care should have been taken to forward communications to General Clausel, not merely by peasants or single officers, but by a regiment of cavalry, and also to send positive orders to hasten the departure of the convoy from Vittoria, in order to avoid an encounter with it on its road, and the dangerous confusion which would necessarily ensue.

On the 18th, General Reille advanced upon Osma with the divisions Sarrut, Lamartinière, and Maucune, and had scarcely set out when he was assailed by a cloud of enemies, from whom he escaped only by the exercise of the utmost vigour and presence

of mind. Arriving at Osma, he found numerous hostile troops, Spaniards of the army of Galicia, posted towards Barbarossa, at all the approaches of the mountains, in a manner which seemed to show that they were about to cross the Pyrenees at Orduna for the purpose of cutting off the Bayonne route; but this they did not do, their real object being merely to arrive at the foot of the mountains before us, so as to be able to take commanding positions on our flank, in case we should have resolved to fight a defensive battle at the foot of the Pyrenees, or to precede us to the Col de Salinas for the purpose of cutting us off before we should have regained the French frontier.

General Reille, finding the Orduna route intercepted, readily renounced an operation which he considered ill advised, and determined to regain by a lateral movement the great route from Miranda to Vittoria. In the meantime, Joseph, on his side, set out during the night of the 18th of June for Vittoria, and on the morning of the 19th all our troops were in full march upon this city, which, situated at the foot of the Pyrenees on the Spanish side, rises in the midst of a pretty plain which is entirely closed in by mountains. If we take up a position with the Pyrenees behind us, we have upon our right Mount Arrato, separating us from the valley of Murguia, whilst in front of us lies the Sierra de Andia, and on the left stand the hills across which passes the route from Salvatierra to Pampeluna. A little river named the Zadarra waters the whole of this plain, flowing at first along the Pyrenees, from amongst which it has its source, and then skirting the base of Mount Arrato to the right for the purpose of escaping by an extremely narrow defile across the Sierra de Andia.

The bulk of our army, coming from Miranda and the banks of the Ebro, traversed the great Bayonne route, which runs directly into the plain of Vittoria, by the defile traversed by the Zadarra. General Reille arrived at it by a lateral direction, and entered it by the various cols of the Mount Arrato. The corps with which Lord Wellington had always attempted to outflank us, and which was composed of Spanish and English troops, might have anticipated our arrival at the passes of Mount Arrato, and thus have occupied the plain of Vittoria before us, had not General Reille held it in check by the vigour with which he disputed the ground during the whole of the 19th, on the evening of which day our three armies had safely effected their junction.

It now became a matter of urgent necessity to determine what should be the course of future resolutions. As it was not to be supposed that Lord Wellington would permit us to repass the Pyrenees without giving us battle, unless, indeed, we fled before him from Vittoria across the Col de Salinas in a manner

which, besides the shame attendant upon it, would necessitate the abandonment of General Clausel to the greatest perils, since he would in that case be left alone upon the other side of the Pyrenees, and which would, moreover, although in a less degree, compromise the safety of Marshal Suchet and all the troops under his command, distributed from Saragossa as far as Alicante. To preserve, therefore, the honour of our arms and the troops of General Clausel, as well as to secure the safety of those of Marshal Suchet, it was absolutely necessary that we should engage the enemy in battle at the foot of the Pyrenees, in the basin of Vittoria, where the junction was to be effected with General Clausel. As, however, it was possible that a delay of one or two days might intervene before this junction could take place, and as the total available force of our army at this time amounted only to about fifty-four thousand men, care should have been taken to obtain as many advantages of ground as possible, to relieve the army of the presence of the immense convoy by which it was accompanied, and to send to General Clausel, not merely by ill-paid peasants, but by means of a regiment of cavalry, fresh and precise information with respect to the place of rendezvous.

But of these various precautions none were taken: the 19th being allowed to pass by without the removal of the convoy, or the despatch of any messengers to General Clausel besides peasants, on whom no reliance could be placed, and who, even if they had been faithful, would have been in great danger of being stopped. On the following day, the 20th, instead of mounting their horses and proceeding to reconnoitre the country, Jourdan and Joseph remained quietly in Vittoria; the former labouring under a violent attack of fever, whilst the latter, able to see only with his master's eyes, deferred making any reconnaissance until the morrow. With respect to the convoy, however, its presence with the army being a source of continual embarrassment, it was resolved that its departure should take place immediately, under the protection of the division Maucune.

The only measures taken on our side during the 20th consisted in sending to Tolosa the convoy, which ought to have been despatched thither on the 19th, in posting General Gazan with the army of Andalusia opposite the defile (La Puebla) by which the Zadarra flows across the Sierra de Andia; Count d'Erlon, with the army of the centre, behind General Gazan; and in the rear to the right, along the Zadarra, General Reille with the two remaining divisions of the army of Portugal, for the purpose of holding in check the *corps tournant* of the English, which was approaching by the Murguia route; to all the other pieces of negligence being added the neglect to cut a

single one of the bridges of the Zadarra. Between our several infantry corps were placed our fine cavalry, which unfortunately could be of but slight service on the ground which we now occupied, the basin of Vittoria being seamed by numerous canals. It numbered nine or ten thousand troopers, and our infantry consequently numbered no more than forty-three or forty-four thousand combatants—a force about half that of the enemy.

On the following day, the 21st, as General Clausel had not yet appeared, and as the enemy could not be supposed to be much longer inactive, Joseph and Jourdan wished to reconnoitre the ground for the purpose of preparing for the struggle which was evidently impending. Marshal Jourdan, somewhat recovered from his fever, although still suffering under it, managed to mount his horse, and proceeded with Joseph to reconnoitre the plain of Vittoria. On the right of our position, in the rear, General Reille, with the French divisions Lamartinière and Sarrut, and the remains of a Spanish division, guarded the bridges of the Zadarra; the Pont de Durana, situated in the mountains on the side of the Pyrenees, being guarded by the Spanish division, whilst the Pont de Gamarra-mayor, situated at the entrance of the plain, was occupied by the division Lamartinière, and that of Arriagua, which was situated in the midst of the plain, and above Vittoria, was defended by the division Sarrut. Behind these divisions were posted, besides the light cavalry, several divisions of dragoons, ready to pour down upon any of the enemy's troops which might cross the Zadarra. But better than all these measures would have been the destruction of the bridges of this little stream, and the defence of its fords by artillery.

Advancing in a direct line towards the entrance of the plain, at the débouché of the Puebla defile, Jourdan and Joseph ascended an eminence named Zuazo, which cut the Vittoria basin transversely, and commanded the outlet of the defile, and then Marshal Jourdan's practised eye immediately perceived that it was there that should be posted General Gazan, at the head of the whole of the army of Andalusia, that the height should be fortified with artillery, and that Count d'Erlon should be posted on the right upon the Zadarra, for the purpose of effecting a junction with General Reille and guarding the Pont de Trespuentes, which debouched upon the flank of the Zuazo height.

Officers of the staff were immediately sent to General Gazan, directing him to execute these various measures; but it was too late, for the battle at that moment began. Lord Wellington, as could be readily foreseen, was unwilling, after having accompanied us so far, to allow us to cross the Pyrenees without first giving us battle, so as to be able, if possible, to

cross them himself in the track of a vanquished army. He had sent forward General Graham with two English divisions, with the Portuguese and Spanish troops forming his left, on the Murguia route, across the passes of Mount Arrato, for the purpose of endeavouring to force General Reille upon the Zadarra. He had moved his centre, composed of three divisions under Marshal Beresford, across the other passes of Mount Arrato, that it might thus debouch upon the Zadarra, towards the middle of the plain close to the Pont de Trespuentes, opposite General d'Erlon, and on the flank of the Zuazo height. Finally, his right, composed of two English divisions under General Hill, and of the Spanish division Morillo, which had followed our army along the Miranda route, was to penetrate the Puebla defile, and debouch at the very foot of Zuazo. All these corps were already on their march when Marshal Jourdan and Joseph sent to General Gazan the order to retreat towards the Zuazo height, from whence it would be possible to crush any troops which might force the Puebla defile, or any which might cross the Zadarra at Trespuentes.

When the aide-de-camp who was the bearer of these orders reached General Gazan, the latter, who was already engaged with the enemy, declared that it was impossible that he should execute them. Upon this, Joseph hastened up to his position, and at once perceived the posture of affairs. On the right were to be seen Beresford's troops, which, having crossed the nearest cols of Mount Arrato, were attempting to pass the Zadarra at Trespuentes; whilst in front, in the Puebla defile, was General Hill, who had thrown to the right upon the heights of the Sierra de Andia the Spanish division Morillo, in order to support the English troops which sought to force the passage.

Jourdan and Joseph now ordered General Gazan to send a brigade to endeavour to dislodge the Spanish troops from the heights of the Sierra de Andia, and to support it by a whole division should it be necessary; and as soon as the height should have been retaken, to crush the Spaniards in the Puebla defile, and following them in their flight, to throw himself upon General Hill's flank. In the meantime, he was to bar the defile with the divisions Darricau and Conroux, to hold the division Villatte in reserve on the left, and to employ the division Leval on his right in observation of the troops under Beresford, which threatened to cross the Zadarra at Trespuentes. Count d'Erlon, in position behind General Gazan, was to watch the Zadarra, and to be ready to fall upon the troops which should attempt to pass it at any point between himself and General Reille.

Scarcely had these orders been issued when the firing extended in a vast circle on our left, front, and right. General

Gazan's first attempts to drive the enemy, in accordance with the orders he had received, from the heights on our left, which formed the extremity of the Sierra de Andia, being made with insufficient force, were ineffectual, the rocky and wooded ground enabling the Spaniards to offer a vigorous resistance. Pressed by Marshal Jourdan to act with greater vigour, he sent first one brigade and then another from his front, to support the brigade which had first been sent to take the heights; but the result was, that these two brigades, which would have been more than sufficient if they had been advanced en masse and simultaneously upon the height which was on our left, remained half-way, exchanging fire at a disadvantage with the well-posted Spaniards, and affording no support to the brigade of the advanced guard, which suffered considerable loss. Two hours were thus lost, without the acquisition of any decided advantage; a loss of time which was so much the more to be regretted, because had it been well employed, the Spaniards might have been driven from the heights of the Sierra de Andia into the Puebla defile, the English troops which were endeavouring to cross this defile equally repulsed, and immediate succour carried to General Reille, who was soon to be vigorously attacked.

The king and the marshal reiterating these orders, General Gazan resolved at length to advance the division Villatte, which was posted a little in the rear on the left, against the heights which he had now so long and fruitlessly attacked. The division Villatte rapidly climbed the slopes of the Sierra de Andia, under a plunging fire of the most murderous description, in spite of which they drove back the Spaniards from the lower part of the slopes to the upper, and thrust them into the woods with which the heights were crowned. But in the meantime the English divisions under General Hill, perceiving that our front was enfeebled by the absence of the brigades which had been removed from it (being those of Generals Conroux and Darricau), and perceiving, moreover, that an important village situated on our right, and named Subijana de Alava, had been completely exposed by the departure of the division Villatte, threw themselves upon this village, debouching vigorously from the defile, and succeeded in taking it. At the same moment, the English forces broke into the plain, and it became very difficult to repulse them. Marshal Jourdan considered that it would be advisable to throw upon them one of the divisions of Count d'Erlon, whose troops had been posted in reserve in the rear on the right. But Count d'Erlon, perceiving that Beresford's troops threatened to cross the Zadarra at Trespuentes, had sent his two divisions in succession in that direction; there remained, consequently, no

reserve, and to add to the embarrassment, heavy firing began to be heard in the direction of the lower part of the plain.

Yielding to these various circumstances, the king and the marshal now ordered a retrograde movement upon the Zuazo height, from whence it would be possible by means of a powerful artillery fire to check the advance of the enemies who had invaded the plain by all its avenues, some passing the Zadarra at Trespuentes, some entering it in front of us by the Puebla defile, and others descending into it on our left from the heights of the Sierra de Andia. At the same time Marshal Jourdan ordered General Tirlet, who had the chief command of our artillery, to establish a battery on the Zuazo height.

These orders being more accurately executed than those which had been given to General Gazan, produced a result which might have been decisive; for if, at the moment when the English troops, advancing from the Puebla defile and crossing the Zadarra at Trespuentes, were thrown into confusion by the fire of the forty-five pieces of cannon which General Tirlet had without loss of time established on the Zuazo height—if at this moment, we say, four or five thousand men had been available, and hurled upon the broken masses of the English troops, it is most probable that they would have been driven back into the defile, suffering a severe check and considerable loss. Unfortunately, General Gazan, instead of falling back upon the transversal height of the Zuazo, had gone towards the left to take up a position half-way up on the flank of the Sierra de Andia, near the division Villatte, by which means an open space was left between his troops and those of Count d'Erlon, who did his best with his two divisions to defend the passes of the Zadarra above and below Trespuentes. There remained, therefore, on the Zuazo height, on which all depended, but an unsupported force of artillery. At the bottom of the plain, General Reille, attacked at Durana, at Gamarra-mayor, at Arriagua, defended himself most valiantly, and now losing one, now another of the three bridges, ever retook them by the exercise of the utmost vigour; but at the same time he intimated that if he were not speedily reinforced, he should be compelled to give way. And now Marshal Jourdan, clearly comprehending the existing state of affairs, advised Joseph to order a retreat along the great Bayonne route, by Salinas and Tolosa, for the purpose of saving the artillery; for if the adoption of the route by Salvatierra and Pampeluna would lead to a junction with General Clausel, it was also tolerably certain that it would lead to the loss of all the cannon on account of the bad state of the roads.

The order for a retreat had scarcely been given when it



was executed, but without that concert and *l'ensemble* which would have obviated the inconveniences attending a retrograde movement. Count d'Erlon, not seeing the English on his left, and perceiving the English cavalry ready to pour down upon the plain, fell back in the direction of the Zadarra, and thus left Vittoria exposed. The enemy's cavalry threw itself in this direction, and created there an almost indescribable confusion. The convoy, to the defence of which a division had been devoted, had not yet wholly departed. There remained a park of artillery numbering a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, a great amount of baggage, and a large number of fugitive families, as well as of soldiers who had been sent out in foraging parties. The appearance of the English dragoons filled these persons with an extreme terror, which they expressed by an immediate flight and the utterance of loud cries. Their first movement was in the direction of the great Bayonne route and the Col de Salinas; but General Reille, disputing with varying fortune, but the utmost determination, the Upper Zadarra, covered this route with fire and blood. The fugitives betook themselves in the next place to the Pampeluna route by Salvatierra. General Tirlet, who had hastened to Vittoria to conduct the retreat, knowing the bad state of the Salvatierra route, and knowing also that the arsenals of the frontier were well stored, gave orders that the artillery should be abandoned, care being taken only for the preservation of the men and horses.

The retreat, which had at first been in the direction of Salinas and Bayonne, was now towards Pampeluna, or in other words, in the direction of Navarre; and at this moment the position of General Reille became one of great peril; for this general, having maintained his position as long as possible on the Zadarra, driving back the English and Spanish troops to its farther bank, whenever they had succeeded in forcing one of the three bridges which he had to defend, had determined, when he saw that the retreat had taken a direction towards Salvatierra, to fall back in this direction also. But to escape in safety from the position he held, it was necessary that he should hold in check, on the one side, the hostile troops which had crossed the Zadarra before him, and on the other, those which had debouched from Vittoria on his rear. In spite, however, of incessant attacks on the part of the enemy's cavalry, whose charges he received in square and repelled with considerable slaughter, he succeeded in conducting his troops in safety to the Salvatierra route, along which were hurrying, in headlong confusion, the various corps of our army, and the straggling line of the vast convoy which we had conducted with so much trouble from Madrid to Vittoria.

Our loss during this fatal day amounted to about five thousand in killed and wounded; that on the side of the English being almost as great. But it must be added that we left in the hands of the enemy about fifteen or eighteen hundred prisoners, as well as two hundred pieces of cannon, not lost in action, but abandoned on account of the want of a road by which they could be carried away; more than four hundred caissons, and an infinite number of baggage waggons. Joseph failed to save even his own carriage, which contained all his papers.

It will naturally be asked, where at this moment was General Clausel, with his fifteen thousand men, and what was being done on the other side of the mountains by General Foy, who, reinforced by several small garrisons and the soldiers of General Maucune, had also under his command fifteen thousand men, the presence of whom would have been of the greatest use on the fatal plain of Vittoria? These thirty thousand men, added to the fifty-four or fifty-five thousand under Joseph, would have been able to defeat the English and drive them back into Portugal—a result which would have facilitated the conclusion of a peace, and on such terms probably as would have completely satisfied Napoleon's pride. But on this occasion, as on so many others, there was a want on our side of proper management. General Foy, who was only separated from Joseph by the mountain of Salinas, had only learned the presence of the army at Vittoria by the appearance of the division Maucune, escorting the convoy; and had the movement now executed by this division been executed two days earlier, the convoy might have been placed in safety, and a reinforcement marched upon Vittoria of ten or twelve thousand men. As for General Clausel, as soon as he had received information of the advance of the English and the retreat of our army, he had assembled his divisions in all haste, had reached Logrono on the 20th, and sought on all sides to obtain news of Joseph, and although unable to procure direct information, was led by various circumstances to conclude that the French army had marched from Miranda upon Vittoria. On the 21st he determined to advance by Penacurada to the other side of the Sierra de Andia, thinking it probable that this movement might lead him to Joseph's army. He accordingly advanced, and at the close of the day learned that a battle had taken place which had not had for us, alas! a fortunate result; and on the morning of the 22nd, being anxious to learn the real state of affairs, he had the boldness to ascend the Sierra de Andia to obtain a view of the plain of Vittoria. Perceiving from the summit of this sierra the extent of our disaster, and that he was separated from Joseph by the victorious English, he found that it was

necessary to take measures for his own safety, and regaining the banks of the Ebro, descended as far as Logrono; and then, the English, who had pursued us into Navarre, being always between himself and Joseph, he took the resolution—as wise and bold a one as any to be found in the history of military tactics—of marching towards Saragossa, not only for the purpose of saving his own *corps d'armée*, but also for the purpose of covering Marshal Suchet's rear and securing his retreat.

In the meantime, Jourdan and Joseph had reached Pampeluna with an army terribly discontented with its leaders, but still undemoralised, and capable, especially with the aid of the natural strength afforded by the Pyrenees, of offering a formidable resistance to the English. Acting under the advice of Marshal Jourdan, Joseph now sent, after leaving a garrison in Pampeluna, the army of Andalusia into the valley of St. Jean-pied-de-port, that of the centre into the valley de Bastan, and that of Portugal into La Bidassoa valley, so as to close up all the avenues, and gain time for the re-establishment of the artillery, and the reorganisation of the three armies into one. Whilst he was making these arrangements, General Foy, aided by General Maucune, skilfully and bravely made head against the English, who endeavoured to descend from Salinas upon Tolosa, and drove them back to some distance. Spain was lost, but the frontier was still our own, and the empire which had long been an invader was not yet, although too soon to be, invaded.

Such was the campaign of 1813 in Spain—a campaign rendered famous by the disastrous battle of Vittoria, and by its being the conclusion of our occupation of this country in which during six years we had uselessly spilled the blood as well of our own troops as of the Spaniards; and should we be willing to examine its events dispassionately, we can have no great difficulty in discovering the true causes of the reverse which for us was its result. And the chief cause of this result, as of so many others similar to it, must be looked for in the orders given by Napoleon himself, who, regarding Spain as but an accessory of his immense enterprises, failed to devote to the operations conducted in it the necessary forces, and permitted himself to indulge in calculations which were unfitted to secure their success. The forces which he had this year left in Spain, amounting as they did to eighty thousand men, would have been sufficient to maintain a position in Castille against the English; but with the twofold object of preserving the northern provinces, which he intended to reserve to himself on the conclusion of peace, and of alarming the English for the safety of Portugal, for the purpose of deterring them from undertaking any enterprise against the south of France, Napoleon

had again involuntarily caused the dispersion of our lately concentrated troops from Salamanca to Pampeluna; a result of the battle of Vittoria, for which it is impossible to find any other cause than the orders sent from Paris, issued by Napoleon at a great distance from the scene of the events to which they were to apply, before he could receive information of the events themselves, and reiterated by the minister of war with an obstinacy which was quite inexcusable when the course of affairs and the remonstrances of Marshal Jourdan had pointed out the danger which must result from them. But to this principal cause must be added another, an old and fruitful source of disaster to our arms in the Peninsula, and which was the want of unity in the command of our troops there. The existence of this defect must be attributed to Napoleon, who always refused to grant to his brother Joseph the necessary authority, whilst the latter knew as little how to assume it as the generals under him knew how to accord it.

Unable to follow in detail the course of events in Spain, absorbed as he was by the war which he personally carried on in Saxony, Napoleon, trusting implicitly to the despatches sent to him by the minister of war, who, whilst writing in the most friendly tone to Joseph, sent the most unfavourable reports to Dresden—Napoleon, we say, had now a double cause of irritation: the deplorable results, and the errors which had led to them, and which could not but disgust his keen military genius. The results were, that Spain was lost, that the French frontier was threatened, that the most efficacious means of negotiating with England were annulled; that as Spain was no longer ours to yield, new sacrifices must be added to those which Austria already demanded; that the arrangement of a peace must consequently be more difficult than ever; and that, finally, all those who believed that the moment had come for the destruction of France must necessarily be inspired with a large degree of confidence. With respect to the faults, they were gratuitously aggravated in Napoleon's eyes by the minister Clarke, who concealed the fact that Jourdan had earnestly remonstrated against the orders reiterated from the bureaux of Paris; that the resistance offered by the individual staffs of the several armies to the commands issued from headquarters had proved a serious inconvenience; that the English forces numbered almost a hundred thousand, and the French, at the most, no more than fifty thousand. Indeed, with respect to this last circumstance, he stated the numbers of the English as forty or forty-five thousand, entirely ignoring the Portuguese or Spanish troops, and set forth the French army as consisting not of the troops which were actually on the field of battle, but of those which might have been there if the orders from Paris

had not dispersed them, and made it appear as though, whilst the enemy's troops numbered only forty-five thousand, ours had amounted to some eighty or ninety thousand.

We may well understand that Napoleon, considering on one side the results, and on the other the faults, real and imputed, of Joseph and Marshal Jourdan, who had already gravely displeased him, and having by his side a formidable accuser in the person of Marshal Soult, fell into a state of excessive irritation on receiving information of the events in Spain. And this excessive irritation burst forth in a feeling of anger against his brothers generally; whilst he should, on the contrary, in justice, have recognised the fact, that his own ambition, rather than that of his brothers, had led to the adoption of that policy which had produced the existing state of affairs, and that after having given them thrones or placed them in the command of armies, he had omitted nothing which could tend to render their task more difficult than it naturally was. He had, in fact, required of them that they should entirely ignore the interests of their subjects, and that they should effect all that he required of them without any, or with scarcely any, resources; a course of conduct which was excessively cruel on his part, and had caused more than one family scandal, such as was the abdication of the King of Holland. With respect to Joseph especially, after having brought this prince from Naples, where he held a position suited to his character and his talents, and transferred him to Spain, with scarcely a reference to his own feelings on the subject, throwing him into the midst of a frightful war, to carry on which he afforded him some momentary assistance, but in the midst of which, when he himself became wholly engrossed in the Austrian war in 1809, and the Russian war in 1812, he left him without reinforcements or money, exposed to the hatred of his subjects, and the disobedience, or even arrogance, of his generals; at the same time refusing to listen to his suggestions, which were generally justified by the event, only replying to them by uttering mockeries respecting his pretensions to military skill, and his manners—mockeries of which the echo had spread from the French court to that of Spain, and tended to aggravate the disregard testified towards the new monarch. Napoleon really loved the several members of his family, but spoiled by the possession of unlimited power, he held the rights of his brothers in as little account as those of peoples.

He now treated Joseph with extreme severity. "I have too long compromised my own affairs for the sake of serving the interests of these *imbéciles*," he wrote to the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, to the minister of war, and to the minister of police; and after this preamble, proceeded to give orders

with reference to Joseph of a character as severe as they were humiliating. In the first place, he selected as his successor in the command of the armies of Spain a man the choice of whom could not fail to be in the highest degree offensive to Joseph, being no other than Marshal Soult, who was at this time in Dresden, and on whom Napoleon now conferred the title of his lieutenant in Spain, with extraordinary powers; directing him to set out immediately for Bayonne, for the purpose of rallying the army, and making head against the English. In the next place, he ordered Joseph to quit Spain immediately; to refrain from visiting Paris; to retire to Marfontaine, and to remain there in a state of complete seclusion; and sent directions to Prince Cambacérès to forbid all the high State functionaries from visiting him, and to arrest him should he not obey his, Napoleon's, orders.

Become distrustful with respect to the fidelity of men, since he had been compelled to acknowledge the fickleness of fortune, he suspected in every direction the existence of plots against the regency of his wife and the succession of his son. This was the real reason of his having been unwilling to leave the Duke of Otranto and Marshal Soult in Paris, and of his having under various pretexts left him without employment at Dresden; this was the reason which had led him to give orders for the arrest of his own brother.

Had the events of Spain, whilst they caused his enemies to be more *exigents*, at the same time rendered him more reasonable and conciliatory, a great evil would have been productive of a great good; but unfortunately it was not so. After having visited Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg, after having passed in review the corps which he was desirous of inspecting, and ordered the execution of the works he had projected on the Elbe, Napoleon returned to Dresden to continue the terrible game of losing time, endeavouring to delay making any explanation with respect to the conditions of peace until the conclusion of the armistice, and to obtain a fresh prolongation of the armistice by feigning at the last moment to negotiate in good faith. Prussia and Russia had chosen their plenipotentiaries, and had sent them to Prague, where they had arrived on the 11th of July, the day before that on which it had been determined that the congress should meet. It had been supposed that Prussia would have chosen as her representative on this occasion the Chancellor de Hardenberg, and that the representative of Russia would have been M. de Nesselrode; but each of these powers being anxious, on account of England, to appear to be induced to take part in this congress only by the solicitations of Austria, had avoided sending to it any representative who should be of equal prominence with M. de

Metternich. Prussia had chosen M. de Humboldt, whose name was already illustrious in the scientific world, but was as yet unknown in that of politics, and who was the brother of the savant who is one of the glories of the age. Russia had chosen the Baron d'Anstett, an Alsatian (consequently a Frenchman), a member of an emigrant family, a man of some mind, but possessed of little personal influence, and inspired with sentiments of extreme hostility towards France.

As soon as these two negotiators had arrived in Prague, they communicated their powers to the mediator, and speedily began to utter complaints of the disrespect shown to them by the non-arrival of the French plenipotentiaries, and the absence of even any intimation with respect to the time at which they might be expected. M. de Narbonne, who had returned to Prague as ambassador, and who, it had been hinted, was to be one of our plenipotentiaries, had been furnished with neither powers nor instructions; and to all the remonstrances which M. de Metternich transmitted to Dresden, M. de Bassano replied that the fault lay with the Austrian cabinet, which had permitted the emperor to set out for Magdeburg without officially communicating to him the ratification of the new convention, prolonging the armistice to the 16th of August. To this reproach M. de Metternich had replied, "That as the French court had actually received information of this ratification, it might, whilst awaiting the arrival of the official communication of it, have nominated the plenipotentiaries and made them set out for the place of meeting; a course which would have satisfied those duties of politeness which are as much an obligation upon one State with respect to another as they are upon individual members of society with respect to each other." M. de Bassano, however, without paying any attention to this answer, again declared that M. de Metternich was alone the cause of the delay.

Napoleon having returned to Dresden on the 15th, after a journey of five days, and having at length received the ratification of the new convention by Austria, Prussia, and Russia, could no longer defer the nomination of his plenipotentiaries, and he now accordingly entrusted MM. de Narbonne and de Caulaincourt with the duty of representing him at the congress of Prague; and he could not have selected wiser or more enlightened men, or any inspired with sentiments of a higher order. In nominating M. de Caulaincourt, Napoleon acted in accordance with the secret hope which he always entertained of coming to a direct understanding with Russia, and of concluding a peace which, sacrificing Germany to the two great empires of the east and west, should at the same time be equally satisfactory to Russia and to France—truly a sad kind of peace, which might possibly have flattered Napoleon's own self-conceit, but

could have been in no way serviceable to the true interests of his empire. M. de Caulaincourt, on whom these illusions were partly founded, was far from being deceived by them himself, and as he was one of those rare persons who are at the same time courtiers and honest men, he had plainly declared to Napoleon that it was vain to indulge in the hope of obtaining a species of surreptitious peace by the defection of one of the allies from the others. He added entreaties that he might not be sent to Prague without being entrusted with full powers to seize the occasion which offered of serving and saving his country, and even went so far as to intimate that if this latitude were not granted him he would not accept the mission which it was intended he should fulfil. Napoleon, who was anxious that M. de Caulaincourt's name should give an air of reality to a feigned negotiation, promised that he should have full powers, and the illustrious negotiator, relying upon this promise, submitted to his master's will.

The selection of plenipotentiaries which Napoleon had thus made was universally approved, and produced an impression at Prague which in some degree corrected the effect of our continual delays. Although it was now the 16th of July, and no more than thirty days remained for the completion of the negotiations, it was still possible even now that all might be saved, when an unhappy incident occurred to give Napoleon the specious pretext which he required for the loss of still more time. There were assembled at Neumarkt commissioners of the several belligerent powers, in permanent commission, for the daily regulation of all matters appertaining to the armistice. And when the French member of this board communicated to the others the last convention, which prolonged the armistice to the 10th of August, with a delay of six days between the denunciation of the armistice and the renewal of hostilities, the Prussian and Russian commissioners appeared to be now informed of it for the first time, and to hear of it with considerable astonishment. Having communicated on the subject with headquarters, they received from the commander-in-chief, Barclay de Tolly, the confirmation of the convention, and at the same time were informed that hostilities were to recommence, not on the 17th of August, but the 10th. And this was a declaration as strange as it was unexpected; for according to the real meaning of the convention, the armistice could not be denounced before the 10th of August, and if it were denounced at that time, there would still, according to the terms of the first convention and all the rules usually observed in such cases, be a certain period of delay in the actual resumption of hostilities; and this period of delay, which was fixed at six days in the first convention, would naturally, in accordance with custom, the intention of



the contracting parties, and the terms in which it was drawn up, be an essential item of the second convention. But from hence arose the misapprehension which was to furnish Napoleon with the unhappy pretext above alluded to. The Prussian and Russian sovereigns were surrounded by persons whose patriotic ardour had scarcely permitted them to agree to the first armistice, greatly as they needed it, and whilst they had been unwilling to refuse the second to M. de Metternich's earnest remonstrances, they had scarcely dared to announce that they had done so; and the Emperor Alexander accordingly, as he was on the point of setting out for Trachenberg, where there was to be held a general conference of the members of the coalition, had mentioned to General Barclay de Tolly, without entering into details, that he had consented to a prolongation of the armistice until the 10th of August, but that he had refused to allow it to continue a day longer. In expressing himself in this manner the Emperor Alexander had alluded only to the principal delay, and had not intended to exclude that of six days which was to intervene between the conclusion of the armistice and the recommencement of hostilities. But Barclay de Tolly, exact to excess in the minute observance of forms, refused to accept any explanation to this effect, and declared that he would not venture to take upon himself to decide upon a point of so much difficulty, and that it must be referred to the Emperor Alexander himself.

When Napoleon was first informed of this strange misunderstanding, he was much displeased, regarding it as founded in an attempt to deprive him of those additional days before the recommencement of hostilities which he considered of so much value at a time when every hour was fruitful for him in valuable results. But as, on recalling to mind the discussions which had taken place between himself and M. de Metternich, and the calculations which they had made together respecting this subject, he could not suppose that the second convention would not receive its correct interpretation, he ceased to feel any anxiety on the subject, and resolved to turn it to his own use by making it the source of a new and quite plausible pretext for the loss of still more time. He immediately directed M. de Narbonne to declare at Prague, that as the meaning of the convention in virtue of which the belligerent powers were about to meet and negotiate was contested, it was conformable neither to his (Napoleon's) dignity nor to his safety to treat with persons who were so regardless of their engagements, and that he should refrain from sending M. de Caulaincourt until he should receive a categorical explanation on the subject of the objection which had been raised by General Barclay de Tolly.

When information of this new difficulty arrived at Prague

(on the 18th of July), it produced an impression which was as vehement as it was natural. The Prussian and Russian plenipotentiaries affected to be irritated and offended to a much greater extent than they really were; M. de Metternich was filled with consternation, and the Emperor Francis deeply wounded; for the Austrian monarch and his minister were not only sincerely grieved as they saw the chances of the conclusion of a peace fade away, but also felt humiliated at the part which they had been made to play, and which now exposed them to the jeers of those who were opposed to their mediatorial policy.

M. de Metternich had an interview with M. de Narbonne, and showed every sign of being profoundly vexed; declaring that the fresh difficulty raised by Napoleon was merely frivolous, that it was one which might have been set at rest at the first meeting of the plenipotentiaries, and that Napoleon might have obtained with respect to it, not only the favourable opinion of the Prussian and Russian plenipotentiaries, but also the decisive opinion of the mediator, which was, in fact, already known to him. There was no valid reason, therefore, for the loss of more time, when scarcely twenty days still remained to the 10th of August; and it was impossible to avoid seeing in this conduct a determination on the part of Napoleon to avoid taking any genuine measures towards the conclusion of a peace during the whole period of the armistice. "But let him not suppose," continued M. de Metternich, "that he will succeed by this means in procuring the further prolongation of the suspension of arms for a single day. As soon as the 10th of August shall have arrived, there will be no longer time for the negotiation of peace, for war will be immediately declared. And let him not suppose that with respect to this war Austria will be neutral. No! After having endeavoured to the utmost of her power to bring about a peace on reasonable conditions, the only course open to her, should the Emperor Napoleon reject these conditions, will be to array herself in arms against him. Should she remain neutral (which he so much desires), the allies would doubtless be vanquished by him; but Austria's turn would come next, and she would have well deserved the blow which would then fall upon her. We shall not, then, commit this fault; but on the other hand, we are as yet—I pledge you my word and that of my sovereign—free from engagements with any power whatever. At the same time I can also pledge you my word that at midnight on the 10th of August we shall have entered into engagements with all the world except France, and that on the morning of the 17th you will have a force of three hundred thousand Austrian soldiers added to your enemies. It has not been readily, it has not been without grief—for he is a father and loves his daughter—that my master has taken this

resolution; but his duty to his people, to himself, and to Europe demands that he should seize the opportunity of putting an end to the existing state of affairs; and moreover, the only alternative open to him is to become himself, at some future period, victim to a state of subjection to you, worse than that under which you made Prussia suffer. Of course, we know very well how great a risk we run, however numerous our armies, when we venture to encounter the Emperor Napoleon at the head of the soldiers of France; but having well considered this risk, we prefer it to dishonour and slavery. Let it not be said hereafter that we have in any way deceived you! Until midnight on the 10th of August all may be arranged; but when that hour shall have passed by, there will no longer be the possibility of any respite, and your lot will be war—war with all the world—even with us!” “What,” said M. de Narbonne, “not one moment’s delay, even if negotiations should have already commenced?” “Only on one condition,” replied M. de Metternich, “only on condition that the proposed bases of peace should be accepted in their entirety, and that details alone should remain to be arranged.”

M. de Narbonne, who thoroughly comprehended the present posture of affairs, now wrote to M. de Bassano that it was absolutely necessary to determine upon a war with the whole of Europe or to negotiate seriously; and that this latter course would be necessary, even if the only object were to obtain a fresh prolongation of the armistice. He urged, therefore, that M. de Caulaincourt should be immediately sent to the congress, as the Prussian and Russian plenipotentiaries were constantly threatening to withdraw (and they had a right to do so since it was now the 20th of July, and they had been waiting since the 11th), and if they quitted Prague all would be at an end.

This wise advice, however, founded though it was on a most perfect acquaintance with the real state of affairs, received but little attention from M. de Bassano, and still less from Napoleon. But the latter was nevertheless anxious to obtain a fresh prolongation of the armistice; and as he doubted very much the possibility of obtaining it from Prussia and Russia, inspired as they appeared to be by a spirit of passionate hostility, he considered that a still better means of attaining the object he had in view would be to allow hostilities to recommence with Prussia and Russia, whilst at the same time deferring yet for a time their commencement with Austria, by which means he would gain time for effecting the destruction of the two first before engaging with the third, *whose turn would then come*, as M. de Metternich had said. To enable him to succeed in this scheme, it would be requisite that towards the close of the armistice he should open a negotiation in such a manner as to inspire M. de

Metternich and the Emperor Francis with some hopes that peace might still be concluded, to continue the negotiation concurrently with an actual state of hostilities, and thus probably retard Austria from taking an active part in them, since it was manifest that she would be very unwilling to be at war with France as long as there should be any probability of the acceptance of her conditions. Intending, therefore, to pursue this course, he now sent to M. de Narbonne his powers and instructions, which had been hitherto withheld, together with the authority granted to each of the two plenipotentiaries of acting the one without the other. There could be no longer, therefore, any good ground for saying that the negotiations were suspended, since M. de Narbonne was perfectly competent to carry them on on the part of France, even to their conclusion. But although the merits of M. de Narbonne were duly appreciated, not only in Austria, but throughout Europe, M. de Caulaincourt was regarded as the only one of the two French plenipotentiaries who was really acquainted with Napoleon's views, and so long as he was absent from Prague there was a general tendency to consider the negotiation as simply futile. With reference to this idea, Napoleon declared that as soon as the Neumarkt enigma should have been cleared up, he would despatch M. de Caulaincourt to the congress.

At the same time, M. de Bassano, incessantly endeavouring to model his behaviour upon that of his master, and to imitate his culpable but heroic indifference in the midst of danger, wrote to M. de Narbonne—"I send you more *Powers* than power, and you will have your hands tied, whilst your legs and mouth will be free, so that you will still be at liberty to walk about and eat." This was the tone of the French minister at that fateful moment when the destinies of his master and his country were to be decided for ever.

Having indulged in this joke, M. de Bassano proceeded to inform M. de Narbonne that he might now exchange powers with those of the other plenipotentiaries, but that he was still to adhere to that method of conducting the negotiation upon which France had already insisted. He was consequently to offer that the exchange of powers should take place in a common conference, and when this formality should have been fulfilled, to propose the discussion of the subjects of the negotiation in conferences in which all the plenipotentiaries should take part, in the presence of the mediator, who should thus be both present at and participate in the negotiations, but should not be their *intermédiaire exclusif*.

When all these questions of form should have been settled, M. de Narbonne was to submit as the first basis of negotiation the *uti possidetis*, that is, that each power should retain what

it held at the present stage of the war, as though none of the events of 1812 and 1813 had occurred.

When M. de Metternich learned that M. de Narbonne had received his powers, he was but little consoled by that fact for the absence of M. de Caulaincourt, especially when he knew that M. de Narbonne wished to present and exchange his powers in a general meeting of the plenipotentiaries at which the mediator should preside, but in which the plenipotentiaries should freely discuss the matters on hand, without regarding the mediator as the only channel by which the negotiation was to be conducted. This latter point, as we have seen, had acquired much importance since Napoleon had clearly indicated by his selection of M. de Caulaincourt that he was desirous of coming to a direct understanding with Russia at the expense of Austria; and from the moment this selection had been made, Prussia and Russia, in order that they might not be suspected of being willing to favour Napoleon's intention, affected to be more resolved than even Austria herself to adhere to that form of negotiation by which the mediator would be made the sole channel of discussion. Thus MM. Humboldt and d'Anstett, and especially the latter, had hastened to place their powers in the hands of M. de Metternich, and the latter accordingly declared to M. de Narbonne, that as far as he was concerned, he should be willing enough to consent to an exchange of powers at a general meeting, but that the plenipotentiaries of Prussia and Russia had already placed their powers in his hands, that they were thus legitimated, and that it was very unlikely, if only from natural *amour-propre*, that they should be willing to undo what they had thus done. He proposed to them, in fact, that they should yield on this point, but they refused; and the negotiation, therefore, notwithstanding that M. de Narbonne had received his powers, could not proceed a single step.

In the meantime, Napoleon, ceasing to entertain the illusory idea that it might be possible to enter into a separate negotiation with Russia, was the more anxious to retain Austria in a state of inactivity some days after the 17th of August. For peace itself he was by no means anxious, being unwilling for any consideration to abandon the Hanseatic towns constitutionally annexed to the empire, to renounce the title of protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, or to re-establish Prussia on the very morrow of her defection. Each of these sacrifices would be doubtless a cruel blow to his pride, but he should have considered himself fortunate, after the disasters he had suffered, that his pride alone was to be punished for the errors which produced them, and that he was required to sacrifice nothing that France could really regret; for, as we have

already said, and must now repeat, when there were left to him beyond the Alps and the Rhine, Holland, Piedmont, Tuscany, Rome, as French departments, with Westphalia, Lombardy, Naples, as family principalities, more was yielded to him than France could desire or could firmly grasp. And indeed, it is difficult to understand how, when the chief portion of that chimerical greatness which he desired had been granted to him, he should compromise it for Hamburg or Lubeck, or for an empty title, such as that of protector of the Confederation of the Rhine! Doubtless, if the honour of his arms had been at stake, we might conceive that he should be unwilling to yield, for it is better to lose provinces than the honour of our arms—better, as well for the safety as the dignity of a vast empire. But after the battles of Lutzen and Bautzen, in which children had avenged the misfortunes of our veterans, the honour of our arms was safe, our real greatness was secure, and even also that exaggerated and useless greatness which Napoleon desired. Napoleon's pride alone remained unsatisfied, and to this personal feeling, it is sad to say, he was ready to sacrifice not only the real greatness of France, that which she had acquired without his aid during the Revolution, but also that factitious and fabulous grandeur with which he had crowned her by his prodigious exploits. To this personal feeling was he also about to sacrifice his wife, his son, and himself.

In the meantime, these subjects occupied Napoleon's mind both seriously and constantly, whatever serenity his countenance might wear, by reason of that faculty which he enjoyed in so high a degree of employing his thoughts upon a thousand matters of business of every variety; and whatever might be the feelings of confidence with which he might contrive to inspire himself by the magnitude of his military projects. Constantly engaged, as he now was, in making excursions around Dresden, which frequently extended to thirty or forty leagues a day, and which, as they were made partly on horseback, his growing *embonpoint* rendered the more laborious, he never lost sight of these serious subjects; and whilst studying on the Bohemian frontiers the battlefields which were so soon to be covered with blood, he discussed them with the persons of every profession who accompanied him on his campaigns. Absolute as he was by reason of his power, his clear-sightedness always made him in some degree dependent on the ideas of those who might be around him, for he could not see disapprobation expressed on their countenances without feeling a strong desire to argue against and dissipate the ideas from which it arose.

The prevalent feeling, indeed, with respect to the dangerous character of the existing posture of affairs unloosed the tongues

of the courageous, and saddened the countenances of the timid. The military men who had regarded the position on the Elbe as a most excellent one when the war had to be waged only against the Prussians and Russians, were terrified, now that the Austrian forces were also to be in the field against us, to find themselves on the Elbe with the possibility of being turned by these latter forces on the side of Bohemia, and of thus having the enemy in our rear, between us and Thuringia. At the same time, the politicians saw very clearly that Austria, constrained by the public opinion of Germany, and urged on by an anxiety to secure her own interests, was ready to imitate Prussia, and thus to leave France, now in a state of exhaustion, to struggle against the whole of Europe, rendered vigorous by passion. Both politicians and military men, therefore, were of opinion that the mediation and its conditions should be accepted, even if less advantageous than they really were. Doubtless, neither soldiers nor diplomatists would have wished that France should have resigned, for any consideration, her natural frontiers; but if they had been told that she was offered the possession, either direct or indirect, of Mayence, Cologne, Antwerp, Flushing, Amsterdam, the Texel, Cassel, Turin, Milan, Florence, Rome, and Naples, they would on their knees have besought Napoleon to accept the conditions which granted him such territories as these. They were, however, left in ignorance of the real state of affairs, vague statements being made to them of the demand of sacrifices which could not be submitted to without dishonour. Still, although left in ignorance of what these sacrifices really were, they supposed that France was still too much feared to render it probable that any conditions should be proposed in which she was offered less than her natural frontiers, and in this supposition of conditions which were far less favourable than those really offered us, they were anxious to submit to sacrifices of mere pride rather than encounter the danger of a struggle with the whole of Europe.

Politicians and military men discussed these subjects in the ante-chambers of the palace, or in their bivouacs, closing their lips at Napoleon's approach, but sometimes so tardily as to afford him the opportunity, of which he seldom failed to take advantage, of continuing and taking part in the discussion, should he condescend to do so. When discussing the state of affairs with military men, answers to their objections did not fail him, for if they were right when they remarked that our position on the Elbe would be exposed to being turned, in the case of our being at war with Austria, they were equally in error, on the other hand, when they proposed, as many of them did, that he should adopt the line of the Saale; a line which

was very short, might be easily forced at all points, and was exposed to being turned by Bavaria, as that of the Elbe by Bohemia. To have adopted this line would have been to have exposed our armies to be driven back upon the Rhine within a week; and it would, moreover, have been strangely inconsistent to abandon in the field what had been so obstinately clung to in the cabinet. There was no middle course between accepting M. de Metternich's conditions, or defending the territory they would deprive us of in the field, and this could only be done on the Elbe. But whilst Napoleon's keen logic was sufficient to silence the objections of those around him on this point, the case was far otherwise when the discussion turned upon the political question of peace or war. For on that point Napoleon, perceiving that he was in the wrong, suppressed the truth, and making vague remarks to the effect that the sacrifices at present demanded of him would, if granted, speedily attain the most immoderate bounds, hinted that Austria would soon even venture to demand the restoration of Italy. And at this point of the discussion he would become excited, expatiate on the honour of the empire, and exclaim that it would be better to perish than to submit to the conditions now proposed; the more especially as they were proposed by the Austrian court, which, after having given him an archduchess in marriage, and accepted his alliance in 1812, took advantage of the first disaster which had come upon him to turn against him. To these objections the opponents of his policy rejoined, by admitting that it was disagreeable to have to make sacrifices, especially to those who were to a certain extent traitors against us, but at the same time falling back upon the urgent necessity of peace.

Amongst the most indefatigable supporters of a peace policy was M. de Caulaincourt, who never ceased to entreat Napoleon to endure a temporary vexation for the purpose of saving France, the army, and his own dynasty, and in the performance of this bold and patriotic task he had met with a singular auxiliary in the person of the Duke of Otranto, M. Fouché, who, although endeavouring to regain the imperial favour which he had lost, did not hesitate to obey the inspiration of his good sense, and also, perhaps, of an idea that the fall of the emperor would not be without danger to the men of the Revolution, and boldly maintained that it was absolutely necessary to conclude a peace. In one of the conversations to which we are here alluding, at which had been present M. Daru, M. de Caulaincourt, M. de Bassano, and even the King of Saxony, M. Fouché went so far as to say to Napoleon that if he did not speedily conclude a peace, he would render himself odious to France, and would thereby endanger not only his own fortunes,



but those also of his son and his dynasty. "France," he added, "had been compelled, as a matter of honour, to make one final effort, because she could not withdraw, as though vanquished, from her great duel with Europe, but that after the battles of Lutzen and Bautzen she had a fair right to consider her honour vindicated, and on the sole condition that she should be allowed to retain possession of the Rhine and the Alps, her right to which none of her enemies disputed, she might remain satisfied. And if," he continued, "in spite of the evident possibility of now concluding a peace, war should still be continued, she could not but regard herself as sacrificed to an extravagant system, which had no other foundation than Napoleon's personal feelings, and which she detested as much as Europe, because she suffered as much as Europe from its effects."

To these bold declarations, which irritated Napoleon excessively, he could only reply by repeating that the sacrifices demanded of him by the allied powers were excessive, that his submission to them would only lead to other demands still more extravagant, and such as none of those who objected to his policy could wish him to yield; that the refusal to resign what was not absolutely necessary was the only means of retaining what was; and that one or two more battles must yet be fought, a few more days of warfare yet be endured, for the purpose of preserving a greatness acquired by twenty years of bloodshed, and of procuring a genuine and substantial peace. In short, in this conversation, as in all the others on this subject in which he took part, his art consisted in concealing the real state of affairs, and in leaving his hearers in ignorance that the only sacrifices required of him were Hamburg and the protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine. But whilst he contrived by his eloquence and address to embarrass his disputants, who were, moreover, ignorant of the real state of the negotiations, he could not convince them, or remove from their minds the fears inspired by the fatal resolution which it was but evident he had adopted. One only amongst them, appearing to be free from any apprehension of peril, ventured to affirm that the genius of the emperor, ever fertile in resources, would enable him to triumph over all his enemies, and replace him in at least as exalted a position as that which he had occupied in 1810 and 1811. This was, as the reader will have readily guessed, M. de Bassano, and his conduct in expressing himself in this manner was the less excusable, inasmuch as he alone knew the real state of affairs, and that it was only for the sake of Hamburg and the title of protector of the Confederation of the Rhine that the fortunes of the empire were about to be endangered. At the same time we must add, for the purpose of reducing this

minister's responsibility, which would otherwise be so fearfully heavy, to its proper limits, that he had very little influence with Napoleon, who seemed to be but slightly affected by his magnificent prognostics.

And in Paris as well as in Dresden, Napoleon met with this opposition to his policy. The minister of police, the Duke of Rovigo, who heard more clearly than any other man the murmurs of public opinion, and who, by disregarding, had become so habituated to Napoleon's anger that he no longer feared it, frequently ventured to write to him what none of his other ministers dared to say to him, namely, that the conclusion of peace was an urgent, an indispensable necessity, that all the enemies of the government, who had been hitherto hopeless and dispersed, were now taking courage as well as hope, that the Revolutionists who had so long lain crushed beneath the memories of '93, and the Bourbons who had so long and so entirely been forgotten, were again attempting to attain a political existence, and that the latter were even issuing manifestoes which were read without indignation, and with a certain degree of interest. All these assertions were true, and it was quite certain that the idea of a government for France other than that of Napoleon, an idea which during fourteen years had been entirely forgotten, failing to be entertained even at the time of the retreat from Moscow, began now, in the protracted continuance of an unsettled state of affairs, to be forced into the minds of so many persons, that there was every prospect that it would be generally entertained should the war continue; and that as in 1799 General Bonaparte had been sought as a refuge from anarchy, so the Bourbons would now be sought as a protection from a perpetual state of war. These were the reflections and opinions which the Duke of Rovigo, more or less openly, more or less adroitly, attempted to bring before Napoleon's attention, with a courage which does him honour, but which would have been both more meritorious and more useful had Napoleon's respect for his advice been greater than it really was. Prince Cambacérès could not have ventured to have said as much on these subjects as the Duke of Rovigo, although he regarded them with even more serious attention, for the reason that Napoleon would have regarded similar opinions from his lips of more authority, and would have listened to them, consequently, with even less patience. Becoming tired at length of the Duke of Rovigo's letters, Napoleon directed Prince Cambacérès to inform the duke that they annoyed him, that he, Napoleon, was alone capable of judging what was the right course to pursue, for the purpose of obtaining for France a peace which should be at once safe and honourable; that the Duke of Rovigo in meddling with this matter was busying himself about affairs of

which he was entirely ignorant; and that, in short, he was in future to be silent with respect to them.

Having thus stopped the mouth of the Duke of Rovigo, Napoleon's next step was to give some employment to the Duke of Otranto; an opportunity for so doing arising from an accident which was as strange as it was singular. The unfortunate Junot had never, since he had been wounded in the head in Portugal, recovered either his physical or moral strength. In the Russian campaign he had failed to display his accustomed ardour, although he had been less to blame than was asserted, and the reproaches with which Napoleon overwhelmed him had had the effect of destroying his reason. Sent to Laybach as governor of Illyria, he had there suddenly shown such manifest signs of madness that it had been found necessary to convey him under restraint to Bourgogne, his native country, and he had there died. Napoleon thereupon appointed M. Fouché governor of Illyria—a post but little in accordance with his political eminence, but which he had accepted because he was glad to re-enter the public service in any way. On his road to his new government he would meet with M. de Metternich at Prague, and be able to take advantage of former relations to urge upon this diplomatist the propriety of the views of the French court. But the slight advantage which might thus be derived from this appointment would be more than counterbalanced by the bad effect which it could not fail to produce in Austria, as being a sign that we were very far from being willing to resign Illyria to her.

Still persisting in his plan of gaining time, Napoleon resolved, as one means of effecting this object, to set out, upon the opening of the negotiations, upon a second journey, the object of which would be a visit to the empress at Mayence, and which would doubtless cause fresh delays in the progress of the negotiations. He accordingly set out, leaving behind the necessary powers for M. de Caulaincourt, who was to proceed to Prague as soon as a satisfactory answer should have been received from the commissioners assembled at Neumarkt with respect to the precise period during which the armistice was to continue.

It was now the 24th of July, and it was not probable that an answer could arrive from Neumarkt before the 25th or 26th. On the day after its arrival M. de Caulaincourt was to set out; on arriving at Prague he was to lose a day or two in making the acquaintance of the plenipotentiaries, and to employ five or six more in discussing the exchange of the powers, and the method in which the conferences should be conducted. By these means it would be easy to cause a delay which should extend unto the 3rd or 4th of August, and then,

as Napoleon would most probably have returned to Dresden, he would be able to give fresh directions with respect to the course to be adopted.

In the meantime, the two months which had been lost, as far as respected the negotiations, had by no means, as may be readily imagined, been lost with respect to the military preparations. The infantry, encamped in good quarters, well fed and well disciplined, had greatly improved in all points during this space of time, and in none more than in that of number; whilst the cavalry had gained an entirely new aspect, being now both numerous and well mounted. In addition to the light cavalry attached to each army, Napoleon had four fine reserve corps of cavalry, under the Generals Latour-Maubourg, Sebastiani, de Padoue, de Valmy. The guard, which consisted of five infantry divisions, also comprised twelve thousand troopers, together with two hundred well-served pieces of cannon. Fifteen hundred guards of honour had arrived in Dresden under General Dejean; and having lost en route the unsatisfactory disposition with which they had been at first inspired, had arrived full of aspirations to distinguish themselves in the eyes of the grand army. General Vandamme's corps, which Napoleon had expected at Magdeburg, was in excellent condition; and so also were the four divisions organised at Mayence, which were now marching towards Königstein, where they were to take up their quarters. The supplies of provisions which had been ordered from every direction were arriving at Dresden by the Elbe, and more than fifty thousand quintaux of grain and flour had already been collected there. The energy of Marshal Davout had succeeded in causing the resurrection, so to speak, of the defences of Hamburg, and they already carried two-thirds of the three hundred pieces of cannon with which it was intended that it should be armed. All his military preparations, in short, were being carried out in due accordance with Napoleon's designs, and the successful manner in which they progressed, whilst it by no means tended to render Napoleon more inclined for peace, authorised M. de Bassano to spread abroad declarations that his master's forces were immense, his genius more exalted than ever, and that Europe had cause to tremble, since it was not for the strong to submit to the feeble.

At this time, for the purpose of giving some animation to the camps, in which the young troops had now, with the exception of the hours employed in drill, for two whole months lain idle, Napoleon gave numerous and liberal prizes to be contended for by shooting at marks; the advantages of which proceeding were, in addition to the incalculable one of rendering the troops much more skilful in the use of their weapons, that it gave the men

occupation and amusement, and furnished many of them with the opportunity and means of regaling their comrades. He also had the officers supplied with their pay, that they might be enabled to enjoy the last few days of repose, which were to be for many, alas! the last of their lives. At the same time he arranged that the *fête de Napoléon*, which would properly fall on the 15th of August, should be celebrated on the 10th, in order that its festivities might not be in too close proximity to the fresh scenes of carnage which he foresaw would attend the renewal of hostilities, which was to take place on the 17th.

On the 26th a satisfactory reply arrived from the Neumarkt commissioners with respect to the precise period during which the armistice was to continue; it being admitted that although it might be denounced on the 10th of August, it would not expire until the 16th (inclusive), and that hostilities accordingly could not be resumed until the 17th. The misunderstanding with respect to this matter had been caused, as we have already seen, by the vague manner in which the Emperor Alexander had announced a concession so repugnant to the inclinations of the war party which surrounded him. He was now at Trachenberg, a little town of Silesia, to which he had proceeded from Reichenbach with the King of Prussia and the greater number of the generals of the allied forces, for the purpose of conferring with the King of Sweden upon the plan of future operations. This reunion, which had been much desired by the two sovereigns who were anxious definitively to enlist Bernadotte in their cause, and to put an end to his protracted hesitation, was far from being relished by the Russian and German officers; for it was said that an important command was about to be conferred upon the Prince-Royal of Sweden, and extraordinary honours had already been prepared along his route for the purpose of touching him in his most sensitive point—his vanity; and all this display of attention towards a man who, in the eyes of the Russian and German officers, was no more than a French general, and far from having a right to be numbered in the foremost ranks of French generals, excited in the highest degree the national jealousy of the two staffs; the prospect of being placed under his orders being especially disagreeable to them.

Unfortunately, these staffs had reason to experience similar feelings with respect to another French general, a great warrior, endowed with the most genuine civic and military virtues, who, unlike Bernadotte, whose moderate services had been rewarded by a crown, had received exile as the reward for services of the greatest value, and who, overcome by *ennui* and the feelings of irritation inspired by a rival's good fortune, had allowed himself to be persuaded to leave America for Europe. We allude to the illustrious Moreau, who, induced to visit Stockholm by

Bernadotte, who seemed anxious to lead others into imitating his example, had permitted himself to be led blindly into an abyss, under the influence of feelings which he believed to be honest, because the genuine indignation which filled his heart prevented him from seeing how great a share the craving for occupation had in producing them. His arrival produced a great sensation at the present time, and as it was rumoured that he was about to become the Emperor Alexander's adviser, the jealousy of the Russian and German officers received fresh fuel, bursting forth into exclamations that these sovereigns "seemed to believe that French generals could be overcome only by French generals."

However this might be, Bernadotte had come to Trachenberg, travelling, not as the Russian and Prussian monarchs had, with extreme simplicity, but with all the ostentation of a monarch traversing his States on some solemn occasion. After having reviewed some of his troops, which had already taken advantage of the armistice to pass into Prussia, he had advanced close to Stettin, in which was posted a French garrison, with a brain inflamed with the idea that, Napoleon having become odious to Europe and a burden to France, and the Bourbons being entirely forgotten, it remained for him to replace the former upon the French throne. But whilst he was displaying himself on horseback under the walls of Stettin, in the sight of its French garrison, some guns were fired at him, and when his officers complained of this to the brave General Dufresse, the governor, of this violation of the armistice, he ironically replied, "It is nothing. The guard have discovered a deserter and are firing at him; that is all!"

Arriving at Trachenberg in the midst of a numerous escort, and accompanied by a magnificent retinue, the Prince of Sweden was received there by the Russian and Prussian monarchs with a display of respect which could not have been greater had he possessed the genius of Napoleon himself, or of the great Frederick. The real cause of this display, however, was not so much any talent he might himself possess, as the fears which these monarchs entertained with respect to his fidelity, and their desire to be able to show to the world a lieutenant of Napoleon's so weary of his tyranny as to be ready to turn his arms against him. After protracted hesitations he had agreed at length, when the allies had broken with Denmark and had definitively adjudged Norway to Sweden, to join them with twenty-five thousand Swedish troops, in return for whom he was anxious to be appointed generalissimo of all the armies which should not be under the immediate command of the two sovereigns. He was persuaded, however, to modify his pretensions, and after discussions which lasted from the 9th to the 13th of July, the following plan of campaign was determined on; the Austrian

troops assembled in Bohemia, Bavaria, and Styria being regarded as certain to co-operate with the Russian and Prussian armies.

Fully appreciating the danger of encountering Napoleon in the field, the allies proposed to vanquish him by the overwhelming number of their troops, which would amount, they hoped, to eight hundred thousand. From the position which he occupied at Dresden, and which he evidently intended to make the central point of his operations, they determined to drive him by means of three great armies: the first, of which, consisting of a hundred and thirty thousand Austrians, and a hundred and twenty thousand Prussians and Russians, should operate by Bohemia upon Napoleon's flank; whilst the second, composed of a hundred and twenty thousand Prussian and Russian troops, under the command of General Blücher, should march directly upon Dresden by Liegnitz and Bautzen; and the third, numbering a hundred and thirty thousand, and entrusted to the Prince of Sweden, and composed of Swedish, Prussian, Russian, German, and English troops, should move from Berlin upon Magdeburg. According to the plan which had been laid down, these armies were to act with great caution, to avoid direct encounters with Napoleon himself, to fall back when he advanced, to attack any one of his lieutenants whom he might leave on his flank or in his rear, again to fall back at Napoleon's approach to support the threatened lieutenant, and to continue this system until he should appear to be so far enfeebled as to render probable the success of a direct attack upon himself. And if, in spite of the advice given to each of the commanders-in-chief of these armies to be guilty of no rashness, to act cautiously with respect to Napoleon, and boldly with respect to his lieutenants, they should expose themselves to and suffer defeat, this would not be any cause for despair, since there remained a reserve of three hundred thousand men ready to recruit the armies in the field, and to render them indestructible by continually renewing them.

This plan, which proved that Napoleon's adversaries had taken advantage of the lessons which he had given them, was formed, not by the Swedish prince, but by the Russian and Prussian generals, who were accustomed to our mode of warfare. Bernadotte, who was now placed in command of one hundred and thirty thousand men, and who had never before been at the head of more than twenty thousand, was much discontented with the position accorded to him, considering it due to his royal rank and military talents that, in addition to the army entrusted to him, he should have the command of the army of Silesia, and that Blücher should be subject to his orders. To such an arrangement, however, there were insurmountable objections, for Blücher was surrounded by the most distinguished and

patriotic of the German officers, and the very idea of serving under Bernadotte, whom they hated as a Frenchman and a traitor to his country, filled them with disgust. He had been induced, therefore, to give up his strange pretensions by the representation that the three armies would act so far apart that it would be impossible that they should be under a single command, and on the condition that if ever it should be necessary for the army of the north (as Bernadotte's army was named) to act with the army of Silesia, he should then have the chief command of both of them.

These arrangements having been made, Bernadotte departed, intoxicated with the incense offered to him by royal hands, and the two monarchs returned to Reichenbach to await the issue of the negotiations. It was on their return that the commissioners at Neumarkt had sent the reply which has been mentioned above, and which left Napoleon without any pretext for delaying any longer to send to M. de Caulaincourt to Dresden.

On the 26th this worthy and courageous person received from M. de Bassano the instructions which Napoleon had left for him before his departure for Mayence, and the difficulties which he was to raise on matters of form were so complacently detailed and so manifestly set forth as a means of causing the loss of time, that M. de Caulaincourt was filled with consternation. He had accepted, only that he might be able to arrange a peace which he considered absolutely necessary, the post of plenipotentiary at Prague, which could not but be more painful to him than any other, since after having enjoyed the particular favour of the Emperor Alexander, he must now expect to be treated by him, either personally or through his agents, with distressing coldness; and to have to expose himself to such treatment for no good purpose, and to take part in an empty farce, was as offensive to his self-respect as to his patriotism. He set out, however, supported by the solitary hope that he might obviate to some extent at least the effects of his master's unfortunate disposition, and on leaving Dresden addressed to Napoleon the following letter, which history ought to preserve.

*To the Emperor Napoleon.*

DRESDEN, 26th of July 1813.

"SIRE,—I am fain, ere I quit Dresden, to give some expression to the feelings which surcharge my heart, that I may be able to proceed to Prague with a mind entirely devoted to the duties with the performance of which your majesty has entrusted me. It is two o'clock. M. the Duke of Bassano has just placed in my hands the instructions, which the absence of the reply from Neumarkt and your majesty's orders have hitherto compelled him to withhold; and they are so different to the arrangements to which



your majesty appeared to consent when I took upon myself to accept this mission, that I should not hesitate even now to decline the honour of fulfilling it, if it were not that, so much time having been already lost, even hours are reckoned up at Prague, whilst your majesty is at Mayence and I am still at Dresden. This being the case, unwilling as I am to take part in negotiations so illusory as those which are about to commence, I am anxious above all things to fulfil my duty, and I obey. To-morrow I shall be en route, and the following day at Prague, as I have been ordered; but permit, sire, that your faithful servant should now frankly express his opinions on the present state of affairs. So dark a cloud hangs over the whole political horizon, that I cannot resist the desire of entreating your majesty to take in time some prudent resolution. Pray, let your majesty be convinced that there is no time to lose, that the public feeling of Germany is irritated to the utmost, and that this popular exasperation, even more than the fears of cabinets, gives to the progress of events a movement which is at once swift and irresistible. Austria is already too deeply compromised to draw back, should not a continental peace reassure her. Your majesty will understand very well that it is not in behalf of this power that I wish to plead, that it is not for any recompense for her abandonment of us in the hour of our adversity that I now ask, that my anxiety is not even for the withdrawal of her hundred and fifty thousand bayonets from the field of battle, although this is certainly an object of consideration; but it is that general rising of Germany against us, which the old ascendancy of this power renders her capable of exciting, that I entreat your majesty at any price to avoid. All the sacrifices which at the present moment you may make for this purpose, and which, consequently, must tend to the prompt conclusion of peace, will render you, sire, more powerful than your victories have rendered you, and will at the same time make you the idol of your subjects, &c."

The manner in which M. de Caulaincourt was received at Prague was worthy of him, and of the estimation in which he was held throughout Europe. As soon as information was received of his approach, all conferences were suspended until he should have arrived, and they were resumed by him with the revival of the question already raised by M. de Narbonne respecting the interchange of powers and prosecution of the negotiation by the plenipotentiaries in a common meeting, over which the mediator should preside, but in which the plenipotentiaries should be at full liberty to confer freely the one with the other. M. de Metternich repeated what he had already said to M. de Narbonne—to the effect, that as the Russian and Prussian plenipotentiaries, as well from *amour-propre* as from interested views, were resolved not to consent to yield to Napoleon's views on this subject, all discussions with them upon it must be perfectly useless; that as, moreover,

it was very evident that Napoleon was resolved that the negotiations should have no effectual result, it would be vain, indeed, to make any great exertions to obtain concessions as mere matters of form. That as it was possible, however, so unaccountable was Napoleon's character, that he might, even at the last moment, send orders to his plenipotentiaries to treat upon acceptable bases, Austria would refrain until midnight on the 10th of August from entering into any engagements with other powers; but that from that moment Austria would be irrevocably numbered amongst our enemies, and would be of all of them the one most resolved to vanquish us or to perish in the attempt.

Convinced by M. de Metternich's tone and manner of his sincerity, M. de Caulaincourt immediately wrote to M. de Bassano and to Napoleon, informing them yet once again of the real state of affairs, and the imminent danger which existed that Austria would almost immediately join the coalition, and thus render complete and definitive the coalition of Europe against us. So convinced, indeed, was M. de Caulaincourt of the peril of our position, that he endeavoured to enlist M. de Bassano in support of what he considered the only true policy, by touching his ambition, entreating him to hasten to Prague clothed with full powers to sign a peace, the conclusion of which would render him, M. de Bassano, the object of universal gratitude, and would save innumerable victims, and amongst them probably France herself.

M. de Bassano, however, who had no will but his master's, and would as soon have thought of defying that of God as his, contented himself with replying to M. de Caulaincourt's earnest remonstrances by granting him some latitude with respect to the question of form, permitting the two French plenipotentiaries to give a certified copy of their powers to the mediator, who might transmit it to the Prussian and Russian plenipotentiaries, so that this preliminary communication might take place in the manner our opponents desired; but insisting, at the same time, that the definitive exchange of powers should take place in a common conference. With respect to the form of the negotiation itself, he consented that the Prussian and Russian plenipotentiaries should proceed by means of written notes, but on condition that the French plenipotentiaries should be at liberty to discuss these notes in conferences at which all the plenipotentiaries should be assembled. Miserable subtleties these, and unworthy of the serious posture of affairs; but M. de Bassano wrote to Napoleon, informing him that he had granted them, in order that all the questions relating to the form of the negotiations might be completely

arranged before his return to Dresden, when, if it should suit his views to render the negotiation a genuine one, he would find all the preliminary discussions concluded.

Napoleon was at this moment at Mayence, whither he had gone, as we have said above, for the purpose of passing a few days with the empress and of inspecting with his own eyes the progress of his military preparations. Setting out on the night of the 24th of July, he had arrived on the evening of the 26th at Mayence, where he was awaited by a brilliant court which had accompanied the empress from Paris, and a great number of his agents who had proceeded thither to receive his personal orders. He found the empress much distressed and somewhat terrified by the existing state of affairs, and she gave way in his presence to the tears which she concealed from the public gaze. But the secret of the interview between Napoleon and his empress at Mayence has remained unknown—probably because there was none. Napoleon's object in seeking this interview was not to burden his empress with the performance of any task, but to see and console her, and to discover whether she had received from Vienna any clandestine communication which might throw some light upon the designs of the Austrian cabinet. As, however, Austria had already candidly declared her intentions through the mouth of M. de Metternich, it was impossible that Napoleon should procure any additional information with respect to them from Mariè Louise.

The Duke of Rovigo had expressed a strong feeling of anxiety to meet the emperor at Mayence, for the purpose of enlightening him with respect to the state of public opinion, which had assumed a very serious aspect since it had begun to be suspected that the congress, the assembly of which had been so long delayed, would have no real result. In fact, the majority of the country was full of chagrin and gloomy apprehensions; whilst hate was taking the place of the affection with which Napoleon had once been regarded, and smothering the feeling of admiration. In Lower Germany and Holland the cry was "*Vive Orange!*" whilst throughout the whole of Germany were to be heard cries of "*Vive Alexandre!*" And if in France none dared to cry "*Vive les Bourbons!*" it was no less certain that they were gradually resuming a place in the popular mind, and from hand to hand was transmitted the manifesto which Louis XVIII. had published at Hartwell, and which would doubtless have produced a general effect, had it not contained too many traces of the prejudices of the emigration. These were the details which the Duke of Rovigo was anxious to communicate to the master to whom he was so faithful a servant; but Napoleon, unwilling to be annoyed by what he called the *grumbling* of the interior, refused to receive

him, and ordered him to remain in Paris, on the pretext that his presence there was necessary.

In accordance with the usual custom of a government which is obstinately resolved to persist in its errors, and sees in the manifestation of public opinion something which it ought to repress, rather than a lesson upon which it ought seriously to meditate, Napoleon now took measures against the clergy of the most extraordinary and vigorous character. The clergy naturally neglected no opportunity of multiplying its manifestations of hostility towards his government, especially in Belgium, and thus, by its own errors, called into existence others, on the part of Napoleon. Ignoring the Concordat at Fontainebleau, they persisted in refusing to acknowledge the new prelates whom Napoleon had nominated, and whom Pius VII., after having promised to do so, had refused to institute. The more prudent of these prelates had refrained, in order to avoid giving occasion for scandal, from visiting their new sees; but the new Bishops of Tournay and de Gand, who both proceeded to their dioceses, attempted to officiate publicly in their cathedrals, and provoked by so doing a species of rebellion amongst their clergy and their flocks, who on the appearance of the prelates at the altar simultaneously fled, leaving the latter almost alone.

Napoleon met this proceeding by ordering that the *béguines* who had taken part in it should be dispersed, that certain members of the chapters of Tournay and Gand should be imprisoned, the others being removed to distant parts of the country; that the same course should be pursued with respect to the professors of the seminaries of Tournay and Gand, who had led their pupils into a participation in the disorder; and that of the pupils themselves, those who were eighteen years of age should be sent to Magdeburg as conscripts, whilst those who were under this age should be restored to their families.

Placing no limits to the exercise of his will, Napoleon soon added to these proceedings one which was still more extraordinary; for on receiving information that certain public functionaries, who had been prosecuted by the government, on the charge of having made very serious defalcations in the taxes of the city of Antwerp, had been acquitted by the juries before whom they were tried, he gave way to a violent fit of passion, and directed, in spite of the remonstrances of the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès and the other officers of the administration of public justice, that the decision of the Antwerp jury should be annulled by a *senatus-consultum*, and that another court should try not only the accused persons who had just been acquitted, but also certain members of the jury which had acquitted them, who were suspected of having allowed themselves to be bribed. He

alleged, in support of this course, an article of the constitution of the empire, which empowered the Senate to annul such verdicts as should be of a nature calculated to affect the safety of the State, but it nevertheless involved almost as many irregularities as possible, for even admitting that the fifty-fifth article of the constitution of the 16th Thermidor, year ten (4th of August 1802), was still in force, it was evident that the judgment in question was not one of those which had been referred to as of a nature to affect the safety of the State, and also, that although this article of the constitution might grant the right of abrogating certain verdicts, it in no way authorised the prosecution of those by whom they had been passed. To these objections, however, which were duly submitted to him, Napoleon refused to pay the slightest attention, not only ordering that the *senatus-consultum* should be drawn up as he desired, and immediately submitted to the Senate, but even signing and publishing a letter in which he took the whole responsibility of the step upon himself. The report of the councillor of State who was charged with the presentation of the *senatus-consultum* contained the following phrase, which completely expresses Napoleon's opinion with respect to the royal power, and contains views which certainly would never have been admitted to be correct, even before 1789: "As our ordinary laws afford no means of annulling such a decision as this, it is necessary that the sovereign's hand should interfere; and as the sovereign is the very fountain of the law, he is endowed with all the powers necessary for securing the welfare of his kingdom, for defending it from injury, or relieving it from any actual evil."

But whilst thus arrogating to himself the possession of unlimited power, he did not fail to mingle with his arbitrary acts others which were in the highest degree benevolent. And amongst these latter may be mentioned the case of M. Muraire, the first president of the Court of Cassation, a distinguished magistrate, who had fallen from certain circumstances into great pecuniary difficulties, from which Napoleon, as soon as they were brought before his notice, immediately relieved him by the grant of some hundreds of thousands of francs from his private treasury, which was, as has been already shown, the army's last resource.

Napoleon took advantage of his sojourn at Mayence to bestow some attention upon the state of his finances. He had taken on account of his private treasury seventy-two millions, on account of the bank ten millions, and on account of the *caisse de service* sixty-three millions, of the new bills issued upon the communal property, the alienation of which had been resolved on, and was now sanctioned by law; and thus was

formed a resource of one hundred and forty-five millions, realised in advance, and which caused no emission of these bills, since the treasuries in which they were deposited retained them *en porte-feuille*. In the meantime, however, the expenses of the treasury during the past six months had exceeded the ordinary receipts by two hundred millions—an excess which M. Mollien did not dare to meet by making use of the bills drawn on the *caisse d'amortissement*, lest they should suffer an excessive depreciation. A few, indeed, had been issued for the purpose of introducing them to the notice of the public, and had been negotiated at a discount of not more than five or six per cent., but to have extended the issue of them to any considerable extent would have been both difficult and dangerous. A further portion might have, however, been paid away in exchange for the goods supplied by the great army and navy contractors, who, anxious to continue the immense transactions they were carrying on with the State, were not over particular with respect to the manner in which they were paid, and were, moreover, in such want of money that they would have been glad to receive it even in a form which they could not realise except at a loss of ten or fifteen per cent. By these new bills also might have been paid those persons who were compulsory contractors, so to speak, to the government, being the landed proprietors, farmers, or merchants, upon whom requisitions had been levied of produce, manufactures, or horses, which they were to supply for ready money. But M. Mollien, who was averse to any but the regular methods of conducting business, preferred to make the contractors and the persons on whom requisitions had been levied wait for their money, rather than issue paper which would be exposed to be qualified as assignats as soon as its introduction into circulation should appear to be in the least forced. The consequence was that the contractors began to murmur, uttering complaints of the delay made in satisfying their claims, and making the delay a reason for dilatoriness in the execution of their contracts; and it was on this account that Napoleon now turned his attention to the matter, at a time when he could only find time to listen to matters referring to the army.

Addressing M. Mollien, Napoleon argued with him that a fall of nine or ten per cent. in the market value of the new securities would be a matter of little moment, since a heavy rate of interest punctually paid would maintain their real value, and that such a depreciation certainly could not be equal to the inconvenience of delaying the payment of those persons whose claims it was so urgently necessary to satisfy. By the issue of the new bills to the government contractors, those of them who had no urgent need of ready money would be thus placed in possession of an

advantageous security, whilst those to whom it was an immediate necessity would be able to obtain it at a discount; the only inconvenience of which would be, that the market value of the new bills would suffer a depreciation of nine or ten per cent., which the exact payment of the rate of interest which they carried would soon render a matter of indifference to the regular holders.

This specious argument would have been almost completely founded on truth, if the depreciation in the value of the new securities could have been limited to ten, to twelve, or even to fifteen per cent. But who could say to what discount they would next fall if once they were issued in any considerable quantity? This was what M. de Mollien feared, and what Napoleon refused to consider, for he ordered that about thirty millions of the bills of the *caisse d'amortissement* should be issued in Paris in payment of the government contractors, and about eighteen or twenty millions in the provinces in payment of the requisitions. Fifty millions' worth were thus to a certain degree forced into circulation; and at the same time, that the realisation of the communal property might be expedited, Napoleon directed the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès to make arrangements for the speedy conclusion of this business by means which should be at once summary and uninterrupted.

Having thus afforded a somewhat violent relief to his finances, Napoleon, whose mind was constantly occupied with the subject of the levy of troops, devised a conscription of a new species, which he hoped to render bearable by giving to it an air of urgent necessity and local importance. As the frontier of the Pyrenees, for example, was by the late events in Spain rendered liable to danger, he proposed to raise thirty thousand men, of the four last classes, in the departments lying between Bordeaux and Montpellier, for the purpose of securing this portion of the empire from invasion. As the soil which these new recruits would be called upon to defend would be their own, Napoleon considered that the urgency of the necessity which induced him to levy them must silence all complaints; and he resolved to apply the plan to the departments of the north and east, demanding of them sixty thousand men, under the pretext of a local and imminent danger. But as these conscriptions would speedily take the form and have the effect of a general conscription, he determined to defer the second of them for two or three months, only levying at once the thirty thousand men required of the departments bordering on the Pyrenees.

Occupied as he was with the formation and development of these various measures, as well as with the review of his troops and the constant inspection of matériel, Napoleon had not much time to bestow upon the empress; but nevertheless,

he did not fail to bestow upon her testimonies of the greatest affection, testimonies which were very sincere, and at the same time had a political aim, since he was anxious that the new war into which he was about to enter with Austria should not cast any shadow upon a marriage which he ever regarded as an important element of his policy, and since also he was desirous, by being a good husband, to place the Emperor Francis under an obligation, as it were, to be a good father. But in manifesting these signs of affection he did but yield, we must repeat, to the inclinations of his own heart, for he was touched by the affection with which he appeared to have inspired this noble daughter of the Cæsars, and he returned it with as much ardour as the other engrossing and exciting matters which occupied his attention permitted. Anxious to preserve her from anxiety as far as possible, he forbore to tell her how inevitable was the approaching war, and how serious would be its character; and with this object of saving her from the pressure of the heavy cares of the moment, he directed her to make a voyage on the Rhine, from Mayence to Cologne, during which she would receive the homage of the populations on each bank; and arranged, further, that after having spent a few days in Paris, she should undertake a journey into Normandy for the purpose of presiding at Cherbourg at an imposing ceremony—being that of the admission of the waters of the ocean into the celebrated basin which was commenced in the reign of Louis XVI., and had now been completed in his own.

Having been from the 26th of July to the 1st of August with Marie Louise, he embraced her in the presence of his whole court, and leaving her in tears, set out for Franconia. He had already inspected at Mayence the divisions of Marshal Augereau; and at Wurzburg he found those of Marshal St. Cyr, which were now actually on their march towards the Elbe, where they were to take up the position of Königstein. After having inspected the citadel, the magazines, and in short, the whole military establishment of Wurzburg, which he wished to make one of the important points of his line of communication, he proceeded to Bamberg and Bareuth, where he saw successively the other divisions of Marshal St. Cyr, and the Bavarian divisions which were intended to form a portion of the corps of Marshal Augereau. After inspecting everything with great minuteness, and giving such orders and encouragements as he considered necessary, he set out on his return to Dresden, where he arrived on the evening of the 4th of August.

The sight of the troops which he had inspected on his route, and his incessant meditations on the plan of the approaching campaign, had redoubled his confidence as well in his army as in the resources of his own genius. Watching the approach



of the terrible struggle which was so soon to take place, considering his chances of success, reminding himself how brave his soldiers were, and how he himself on a time had plucked victory from the very midst of danger, from positions in which his opponents had only found opportunities of error—allowing his thoughts, we say, to be engrossed with such reflections as these, whilst he failed to take into due account the patriotic passions which he had aroused against himself, and the strength of which might very probably compensate for the want of military skill, he felt within himself a species of ardour which gave an air of animation to his whole person, and beamed in his eyes with the light of hope and courage. Those who were around him at this time were struck with it, and to the wiser of them it appeared to be a subject rather for disquietude than satisfaction.

On the very day of his return to Dresden he received despatches from MM. Caulaincourt and Narbonne, in which they entreated more earnestly than ever for permission to carry on the negotiation in good faith, to which, annoyed, apparently, by their importunity, he replied by reproaching them with having permitted M. de Metternich to address them with too little reserve, as though he were offended by the frankness of the latter in stating that under certain circumstances Austria would join his enemies. But having given this undeserved reprimand, he devoted his attention to a matter which was far more serious, and which was the retention of Austria from actually taking the field until he should have been first able to crush the Russians and Prussians. And now, since this object could only be attained by appearing to negotiate in good faith, Napoleon resolved to realise M. de Metternich's prognostic, that matters might be happily settled even at the last moment. Napoleon resolved to direct M. de Caulaincourt, secretly and exclusively, to make a confidential communication to M. de Metternich, in which he, Napoleon, would offer to consent to conditions which would involve the sacrifice of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and the restoration of Illyria, whilst still refraining from giving up the Hanseatic towns, or the protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine; for he thought that at the last moment Austria would consent to yield on these points, or that she would, at least, by the commencement on his part of a sincere negotiation, be induced to refrain from entering the field against him, even after hostilities should have been renewed with the allies.

Putting this resolution into execution, he directed M. de Caulaincourt (who was to keep the matter a profound secret from M. de Narbonne, so that it might wear a more confidential aspect) to seek an interview with M. de Metternich, to address

him on the matter in hand without preface, to declare that he, Napoleon, was anxious that advantage should be taken of the five days which still remained for the purpose of arriving at a mutual good understanding with respect to the subjects of the negotiation, and that Austria should now, since the shortness of the time remaining available for negotiation forbade any indulgence in vulgar finesse, finally and precisely announce her real wishes, so that they might receive immediately an equally precise and equally decisive answer.

Unfortunately, whilst making to Austria this overture, which, although tardy, had still some chance of success, Napoleon added to it a note, referring to the official negotiation, of a very offensive character, since it declared, with considerable plainness, that the difficulties with respect to the form of the negotiation which had been raised by the representatives of the belligerent powers revealed their real intention, which was no other than a design to involve Austria in the war against France at the expense of any amount of bad faith or trickery. And this strange note MM. de Narbonne and de Caulaincourt were jointly to present to M. de Metternich, just before M. de Caulaincourt, taking M. de Metternich aside, was secretly to make to him the proposition above described.

The despatches containing these contradictory instructions reached Prague on the 6th of August, and whilst causing M. de Caulaincourt considerable surprise, filled him with a mingled feeling of joy and sadness, for the period still available for the purpose was so short that he despaired of bringing this negotiation, *in extremis*, to any good issue, and he feared, moreover, that the official note would create an effect most prejudicial to his efforts.

Offended at the official note, M. de Metternich was in the highest degree astonished, when, a few minutes after the two French plenipotentiaries had left him, M. de Caulaincourt returned to make to him Napoleon's secret communication. It arrived at so late a moment, and he was so accustomed to despair that Napoleon would ever be inclined to enter upon a course leading to peace, that he could scarcely believe that he was now sincere, and for this reason alone failed to experience and to manifest that pleasure on the occasion which he otherwise would have had. He expressed his regret that this step had not been taken some days earlier, as in that case, without violating the secrecy which Napoleon insisted should be observed with respect to this secret communication, it would have been possible to sound the Prussian and Russian plenipotentiaries with respect to certain delicate points, and to settle the questions on which the belligerent courts were at issue. However, as Napoleon desired to be informed by the

Austrian cabinet of the conditions which she was prepared to support, and the adoption of which by Prussia and Russia she was ready to demand, he would go, he said, to consult his master, and would be able, he hoped, within twenty-four hours to give a reply.

M. de Metternich proceeded accordingly to Brandeiss, where the Emperor Francis was at present residing, found him as indignant, as every one had been at Prague, at the official note of the 6th of August, and inspired him with a feeling of astonishment, which was at least equal to his indignation, by making him acquainted with the unexpected step taken by the principal French plenipotentiary. Although the character of this proceeding was perfectly in accordance with Napoleon's brusque and undisciplined character, it was yet impossible but that a step towards peace made by him thus at the last extremity should be regarded with suspicion. But whether it were made in good faith or simply as a ruse, both the Emperor Francis and his minister at once agreed that it was necessary to reply to his demand without hesitation, since, if he really desired peace, it was right to come to a frank explanation with him, and if his purpose were only to provoke some inadmissible proposition, it was of importance to frustrate this project by submitting to him those conditions to which Austria had so long adhered, and which certainly France could not regard as dishonourable.

They were, as we have already so frequently said, the division of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and the bestowal of the larger portion of it upon Prussia; the abolition of the Confederation of the Rhine; and the re-establishment of the Hanseatic towns; and finally, the restoration of Illyria to Austria. The fulfilment of these conditions was so absolutely necessary, if Germany was to be re-endowed with any portion of independence, that it was impossible to devise or propose any others; and therefore, as the adhesion of Prussia and Russia to those bases was quite certain, whilst it was equally certain that the renunciation of Spain by Napoleon, and the re-establishment of the Hanseatic towns, would so far satisfy England as to render her unwilling to continue the war alone, it was resolved to communicate these conditions to Napoleon, who was already well acquainted with them, and with the same stipulation for secrecy, which he had himself made, to demand an answer within forty-eight hours.\*

M. de Metternich returned to Prague on the 7th, but was suddenly recalled to Brandeiss by his master, who was all at once seized with a feeling of disinclination to carry on these secret communications. After a fresh examination of the subject, however, M. de Metternich proceeded to convey to M. de Caulaincourt the answer which had been agreed on, telling him that his, M. de Metternich's, master had demanded whether this unex-

pected and tardy communication now made by Napoleon was a step of necessity, or of fraud; that it pleased him to imagine that it was the former, but that in either case he considered it right to answer it, since the conditions which he proposed were such as might freely be avowed to the whole world, and especially to France. He then made verbally the following declaration, authorising the French minister to transcribe it immediately from his dictation.

*Instructions to the Count de Metternich, signed by the Emperor of Austria.*

"Mr de Metternich will require an assurance from the Duke of Vicentia, on his word of honour, that his government will preserve the most profound secrecy with respect to the matter in question.

"Having become acquainted, by means of confidential preliminary communications, with the conditions on which the courts of Russia and Prussia are prepared to negotiate a peace, and having accepted these conditions as my own, because I perceive that they are necessary to the well-being of my States and those of the other powers, and that they are the only ones which could really lead to a general peace, I do not hesitate to declare the terms which form my ultimatum.

"I shall expect an answer either in the affirmative or negative on the 10th.

"I am resolved, as are also the courts of Russia and Prussia, to declare on the 11th that the Congress is dissolved, and that I unite my forces with those of the allies for the purpose of obtaining a peace compatible with the interests of all the powers; and I now declare in brief the final conditions, which, if not now accepted, must be referred to the decision of arms.

"No proposal made after the 11th can have any connection with the present negotiation."

*The conditions regarded by Austria as those on which it would be possible to arrange a peace.*

"The dissolution of the Duchy of Warsaw, and its redivision between Austria, Russia, and Prussia; Dantzig being accorded to Prussia.

"The re-establishment of Hamburg and Lubeck as free Hanseatic towns; and an arrangement to be eventually come to as one of the terms of a general peace, with respect to the other portions of the 32nd military division, and the renunciation of the Protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine, so that the independence of all the actual sovereigns of Germany should be guaranteed by all the great powers.

"The reconstruction of Prussia with a tenable frontier on the Elbe.

"The cession of the Illyrian provinces to Austria. A reciprocal

guarantee that the possessions of the greater and lesser States, as settled by the terms of the peace, should severally suffer no injury or alteration at the hands of any of them."

After this highly important communication, which confounded all the falsehoods which in certain quarters have been set forth upon the subject, M. de Metternich made some explanations, which were also of great moment. He said that up to the evening of the 10th of August, Austria would remain free from any engagement with the belligerent powers; that up to that time she would be able to treat confidentially with Napoleon, as she had hitherto; be free to adopt some of his propositions, and even compel their acceptance by the allies, to whom she was at present bound by no treaty; but that after that time she would be so bound; would be compelled to communicate to them every proposition which might be made to them, and be able only to accept such conditions of peace as they should be willing to receive.

These observations deserved the most serious attention, for the difference between negotiating before the close of the 10th of August and after that time was, that in the former case we should have to depend only on Austria, who longed for peace because it feared war; and in the latter case, we should have to depend on the will of the allies, who were averse to peace, because they expected to obtain more from war, and were under the sway of the passionate influences of the time.

The Duke of Vicentia reported with great exactness the communication which had been thus made to him, and at the same time renewed his remonstrances in words which were as well chosen as they were touching.

"Sire," he said, addressing Napoleon, "this peace will cost you, perhaps, some pain to your vanity, but will detract nothing from your glory—for it will take nothing from the real greatness of France. Grant then, I conjure you, this peace to France; grant it in consideration of her sufferings, of the noble devotion she feels towards you, and of the stern necessities of the moment. Allow time for the subsidence of the fever of irritation against us with which at present all Europe is convulsed, and which even the most decisive victories in our favour would rather still further excite than calm. And this demand for peace I make, not for the mere honour of signing it, but because I am certain that in concluding it you would perform an act than which nothing could be more useful to your country, or more worthy of yourself and your exalted reputation!" What was to be the effect of these noble prayers of a noble heart we shall hereafter see!

Napoleon received M. de Metternich's reply at three o'clock

in the afternoon of the 9th, and should have sent his own answer on the evening of the same day, submitting to the very moderate sacrifices demanded of him, and forwarding at the same time such powers to M. de Caulaincourt as would enable him to sign the basis of peace before midnight of the 10th. But unfortunately he did not take this step, for regarding, in the first place, the determination expressed by Austria of joining the allies on the 11th as mere diplomatic language intended to intimidate him, and hasten his movements; being unwilling, in the next place, to avoid war at the price of such sacrifices as those which were demanded of him, and placing also a blind confidence in the strength of his arms, he was in no haste to adopt or communicate his final resolutions, and thus neglected to take advantage of that moment which, in a political sense, was the most important of his reign. And what was M. de Bassano's course during those fatal hours? Did he not pass them at his master's feet, repeating with his utmost energy the ardent, the patriotic prayers of M. de Caulaincourt.

It was not to such prayers as these, but to echoes only of his own thoughts, that Napoleon listened during the hours which were to bear away with them his greatness and ours! After having passed the night with M. de Bassano in considering and reconsidering the state of his armies, he became convinced that he was powerful enough to meet every danger, and to persist in his own views. He resolved, therefore, to consent only to the following conditions. He was willing that a portion, or even the whole, if Russia and Austria were willing to resign it to her, of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw should be annexed to Prussia; but as, whilst thus granting her some increase of territory, he was most unwilling that she should be rewarded for what he called her treason, he was anxious to drive her back beyond the Oder, to take from her, for the purpose of bestowing them upon Saxony, Brandenburg, Berlin, and Potsdam, to remove her to a position between the Oder and the Vistula, to make her thus a Polish rather than a German power, to permit her to choose as her capital either Warsaw or Königsberg, and withholding Dantzic from her, to make of it once more a free town. He wished to place Saxony in the position Prussia at present held between the Oder and the Elbe, and to bestow upon the former kingdom all the territory extending from Dresden to Berlin. With respect to Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bremen, considering these cities as essential portions of the empire, he would not even speak of their separation from it. He was equally resolved not to resign the Protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine, since it was acknowledged that it was a mere title, and his enemies desired to deprive him of it only for the purpose of humiliating him. With respect to

Illyria, he was ready to yield it to Austria, but was at the same time determined to retain Trieste, which was all that Austria really coveted. He affected also to be resolved to keep in his own hands several positions beyond the Julian Alps, such as Villach and Goritz, and in fact, all the gates through which a descent might be made into Illyria.

Such were the propositions which were the result of the meditations of this fatal night. But as, however, there was no probability that Austria would be able to obtain of her future allies the abandonment of Berlin on the part of Prussia, for the purpose of annexing it to Saxony, and thus forming of this latter kingdom a species of feigned Prussia, he authorised M. de Caulaincourt to give up this first proposition, should it not be accepted, and to consent that Prussia should possess, besides such part of the Duchy of Warsaw as should be granted to her, all the territory which she held between the Oder and the Elbe.

On the morning of the 10th, Napoleon sent for M. de Bubna, who was sincerely anxious for the conclusion of a peace, and who, unfortunately, from a desire to conciliate him, lent himself somewhat too readily to the views of his powerful interlocutor. Having informed him of the secret negotiations carried on with M. de Metternich, Napoleon communicated to him the state of his troops, openly displayed to him the strong inclination he felt to make this campaign of Saxony, his confidence that its results would be in his favour, and his consequent carelessness as to whether peace or war should be the result of the negotiations at Prague. He then proceeded to lay before the Austrian minister his conditions, to which the latter could not, of course, assent, but to which he did not object with sufficient peremptoriness to dispel the illusions entertained by Napoleon. On two points especially, those of the Hanseatic towns and the Confederation of the Rhine, as he had never found his court so resolved with respect to them as to the others, he now appeared very undecided, and Napoleon indulged in the hope that he might be able to conclude a peace without submitting to those two conditions which he found so especially repugnant.

Having dismissed M. de Bubna with directions to communicate to his court the particulars of the above interview, he sent a despatch to M. de Caulaincourt containing his final resolutions; caring little for the fact that this despatch could not reach its destination until the 11th, and whilst awaiting its answer, whatever it might be, continuing his preparations for the renewal of hostilities.

The 10th of August passed, therefore, at Prague without the arrival of any despatch from Dresden, to the great satisfaction

of the Prussian and Russian negotiators, the great grief of M. de Caulaincourt, and the great regret of M. de Metternich, who could not but tremble at the prospect of a fresh war between Austria and France. Several times in the course of the day he visited M. de Caulaincourt for the purpose of learning whether any reply had been received from Dresden, and each time, finding M. de Caulaincourt sad and silent because he had nothing to say, he repeated, that as soon as midnight should have passed, Austria would no longer be an arbitrator, but one of the belligerent powers, and no longer able, consequently, to dictate to the allies conditions of peace.

After having vainly waited during the whole of the 10th, M. de Metternich signed, at length, Austria's adhesion to the coalition, and on the morning of the 11th announced to MM. de Caulaincourt and Narbonne (the latter of whom had remained in ignorance of the secret negotiation)—announced, we say, with evident chagrin, that the Congress of Prague was dissolved, and that Austria, impelled to do so by the duty she owed to Germany and to herself, found herself forced to declare war against France. At the same time, the Prussian and Russian plenipotentiaries announced that they were about to depart, throwing the responsibility of the failure of the negotiations upon France; and left Prague accordingly with an undissembled joy, which was shared by all Austria; the only exceptions being in the case of M. de Metternich, who foresaw the possible consequences of a fresh rupture with Napoleon, and of the Emperor Francis, who was full of anxiety on account of his child.

In the course of the 11th, M. de Caulaincourt received at length the despatch so earnestly expected on the previous evening, and although he could not flatter himself with the expectation that he should be able to obtain all that Napoleon desired, he thought it not impossible that even now he might be able to procure a certain degree of assent to his propositions. Hastening to the Austrian minister, he found him distressed that the despatch had not arrived sooner, vexed that M. de Bubna should have been made acquainted with the secret negotiation, and convinced that Napoleon's propositions could not be accepted; but at the same time disposed to admit that if France should agree to the views of Austria with respect to the restoration of Trieste, the re-establishment of Prussia, and the abolition of the Protectorate of the Rhine, it might be possible to defer the decision of the question of the Hanseatic towns until the conclusion of peace with England. He added, however, that although Austria would have been able twenty-four hours earlier to have imposed those conditions on the allies, it could now only propose them, and could not be at all certain that they would be accepted.



As the Congress was now broken up, and war was formally declared by Austria against France, the Russian and Prussian plenipotentiaries left Prague, and the French plenipotentiaries could not with propriety remain there. It was agreed, however, that if Napoleon should consent, M. de Narbonne should be allowed to depart alone, and that M. de Caulaincourt should remain to await the result of the overtures which M. de Metternich was to make to the sovereigns of Prussia and Russia, who were to arrive at Prague within two or three days. It could not but be very disagreeable to M. de Caulaincourt to prolong his residence in Prague at a time when the Emperor Alexander would be also there, and circumstances would render it impossible that they should meet. But as everything which could afford a chance of the conclusion of a peace appeared to him to be not only supportable, but even highly desirable, he willingly consented to remain. Informing Napoleon of what had taken place between himself and the Austrian minister, he repeated his representations in favour of peace, urged him to grant him some latitude in conducting the negotiations, and to send him authentic powers for the signature of any agreement which might be made, since at this last moment the least defect in any matter of form might be regarded as a fresh pretext, and cause his, M. de Caulaincourt's, definitive dismissal.

These communications reached Napoleon at the time when he was fully prepared for war, and as little distressed as surprised at the dissolution of the Congress. On the very day on which the Congress had been dissolved, the armistice had been denounced by the commissioners of the belligerent powers—a measure which fixed the 17th of August as the day on which hostilities were to be resumed; and as there was but a very slight probability that the negotiations broken off in this public manner could be resumed by means of any private communications, Napoleon acted as though he had no expectation that they would. However, whilst ordering M. de Narbonne to leave Prague immediately, he authorised M. de Caulaincourt to remain there, and consented that his last propositions should be transmitted to Prussia and Russia, and not in his own name, but in that of Austria, since he did not consider it, he said, consistent with his dignity to submit propositions to the belligerent powers. He sent M. de Caulaincourt the formal powers he had requested, but refrained from granting him any latitude in conducting the negotiations, his conditions being unalterable with respect to the Hanseatic towns, the Protectorate of the Rhine, and even Trieste, which he wished to retain, notwithstanding the restoration of Illyria to Austria.

On the 10th of August he celebrated his fête, which was usually held on the 15th, and endeavoured, so far as possible,

to preserve the light and facile spirits of his troops from the oppression of gloomy images. His *corps d'armée* were all prepared, and from the 11th began to leave their cantonments for the purpose of becoming concentrated under their appointed leaders, and advancing to their several positions on the line of battle. The works which he had ordered to be executed at Königstein, Lilienstein, Dresden, Torgau, Wittenberg, Magdeburg, Werben, and Hamburg were completed, or nearly so; and the vast stores of provisions which he had had conveyed by the Elbe from Hamburg to Magdeburg, and from Magdeburg to Dresden, were already at the required points. He determined that he would himself set out on the 15th or 16th of August, when he would proceed to Silesia and the frontier of Bohemia, where he expected to see the commencement of hostilities. In the meantime, he wrote to General Rapp, at Dantzic, reassuring him with respect to this new struggle, conferring on him extraordinary powers, recommending him to defend the fortress entrusted to his charge to the utmost, and promising to release it from blockade almost immediately. To the governors of Glogau, Custrin, and Stettin he wrote in similar terms; and to Marshal Davout at Hamburg, and General Lemarois at Magdeburg, that they were to be on their guard, that the war was about to recommence in terrible earnest; but that he was prepared to meet all his enemies, even though they should include Austria, and that he hoped, before three months were over, to have punished them for their impertinent propositions. He did not, however, for he dared not, tell to any one on what terms he might have concluded a peace; but contented himself with intimating to the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, who was the real head of the government of the regency, that he would speedily be informed of the Austrian demands; that for the moment it was necessary to keep them secret; but that they were in the highest degree extravagant and offensive. To the Duke of Rovigo, whom he respected somewhat less, he ventured to tell a downright lie on this subject, writing to him that his opponents wished to deprive him of Venice; founding this untruth, apparently, on his usual declaration, that to demand Trieste was to demand Venice, which was as true as it would be to say that to demand Magdeburg was to demand Mayence, because the one is on the road to the other. Being anxious to preserve the empress from anxiety, he directed the arch-chancellor to make her set out for Cherbourg, in order that she might not become informed of the renewal of hostilities until after some great battle had been gained, and the greatest dangers had passed by.

At this moment arrived in Dresden one of those of his lieutenants whom Napoleon found most useful on the battlefield,

namely, the King of Naples, whose presence at this time was desirable, as well with respect to matters of war as with reference to politics. We have seen how, weary of Napoleon's yoke, and alarmed also with respect to the fate of the imperial dynasty, Murat had taken care to attach himself to Austria and her mediatorial policy, and that, distrusting even his wife, he had ended by concealing himself from her, and had fallen into a state of febrile agitation. We have seen also that Napoleon, for the purpose of completing the army of Italy, and making trial of the good faith of the Neapolitan court, had demanded of it a division of its troops, and that Murat, carrying on an intrigue with Austria, and anxious, moreover, to keep his own army in his own hands, had refused compliance with his brother-in-law's request. When, however, Napoleon, in accordance with his usual mode of operations, summoned Murat to comply with his requisitions under pain of a declaration of war, Murat, tormented with doubts with respect to Napoleon's destiny, had fallen into a state of perplexity which was little removed from madness, but was ultimately induced by the counsels of his wife and the letters of the Duke of Otranto, with whom he was once more in secret correspondence, to obey his brother-in-law's commands; and as he was anxious that the reconciliation, if it were to take place at all, should be complete, he set out to place himself at the head of the cavalry of the grand army, and arrived in Dresden on the eve of the commencement of the campaign. Napoleon received him graciously, feigning to ignore the past, but still permitting himself to express a certain degree of contempt for his conduct, which Murat perceived very plainly, and in silence.

Accompanied by Murat, then, Napoleon set out on the night of the 15th of August for Bautzen, so as to be at the advanced posts twenty-four hours before the recommencement of hostilities, and evidently without any expectation that peace would result from the united efforts of MM. de Caulaincourt and Metternich. The French plenipotentiary could, in fact, only offer but very unsatisfactory propositions, since Napoleon had persisted in almost all his pretensions; but yet, had Austria been still free, she would probably have yielded to them, in preference to braving the chances of war for the sake of Trieste and Hamburg, the latter of which places was of far greater moment to Prussia and England than to herself. Unfortunately, however, she was no longer free to act as she chose, being able only to tender her advice to her allies, and no longer able to threaten them with the refusal of her alliance should they reject it; and M. de Metternich, discussing the subject with more than usual freedom, and under the influence of evidently sincere feelings of regret, showed very plainly that he despaired of compliance on the part of the allies.

It was agreed that as soon as the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia should have arrived in Prague, M. de Metternich should submit to them, in the name of his master, the overtures in question, and give a reply to them before the 17th of August. In the meantime it was arranged, for the purpose of giving an air of propriety to the position of the Duke of Vicentia, who was uniformly treated with the respect which was his due, that he should await M. de Metternich's reply at the Château de Königsal, situated near Prague, and belonging to the Emperor Francis. He would thus be relieved from the necessity of actually residing in the same town with the Emperor Alexander, and of witnessing the demonstrations of joy with which the allies received the news of the approach of hostilities and the adhesion of Austria to the European coalition.

From the 11th of August a portion of the Prussian and Russian staffs had begun to arrive in Prague, for the purpose of concerting military operations with that of the Austrian army. At the same time an army of a hundred thousand Prussians and Russians entered Bohemia for the purpose of joining the Austrian troops; and the officers of the three countries, embracing each other, uttered exclamations of joy, because they were about to fight, side by side, in what they called the cause of European liberty. In all directions, indeed, there prevailed what may be called a convulsive gladness, for it was a feeling compounded of hope, of fear, and the resolution of despair.

On the 15th the Emperor Alexander made his entry into Prague, and was received there with the honours due to his rank, and to that position as the liberator of Europe which was universally accorded to him by all except the Austrian government, which was offended at the enthusiastic demonstrations of which he was the object, and which was by no means disposed to exchange the domination of France for that of Russia. As soon as he had arrived, M. de Metternich and the Emperor Francis informed him of the secret negotiation which had arisen from the official negotiation during the last days of the Congress of Prague, and demanded his opinion with respect to it.

Intoxicated with success, and an ambition which he was resolved to satisfy at any risk, and at any expense of conciliatory demonstrations towards his allies both new and old, the young Russian emperor affected an air of great humility, and with every testimony of respect for the Emperor Francis, and without hinting at any desire for the dethronement of Napoleon, which would involve that of Marie Louise, intimated a hope that he would be speedily able by means of his arms to obtain

better conditions than those at present offered, and an independence for Germany which should be infinitely better guaranteed. He was able, moreover, to bring forward a reason which could not fail to be all powerful with Austria; and this was, that if the abandonment of the Hanseatic towns by Napoleon were not insisted upon, it would be impossible to obtain the adhesion of England, with whom they were bound in strict alliance; and in addition to this reason he was also able to dazzle the eyes of the Austrian government with a very seducing bait in the form of the possibility that should the allies be victorious, it might regain a portion of Italy. Consequently, without awaiting the arrival of the King of Prussia, Alexander replied in writing to M. de Caulaincourt, through the hands of M. de Metternich, that their majesties the sovereign allies, after having duly conferred with each other, considering that any genuine idea of peace could only be such as was consistent with that plan for a general pacification which their majesties had hoped to mature by means of the negotiations of Prague, could not regard the articles now proposed by his majesty the Emperor Napoleon as likely to conduce to the great end which they had in view, and that consequently their majesties considered them unacceptable—a statement which was equivalent to a declaration that they considered them unacceptable in respect to England.

Although expecting this reply, M. de Caulaincourt was much distressed on receiving it, his good sense leading him to expect that the greatest evil must result from the continuance of the war; and in a final interview with M. de Metternich he exchanged expressions of regret with that minister at the course of events; but at the same time agreed with him that it might be possible to open a congress even during the progress of actual hostilities. Writing to M. de Bassano, he expressed in bitter terms his indignation at having being employed in an altogether illusory negotiation, and on meeting Napoleon, displayed respectfully but firmly his serious distress that 'this last opportunity of concluding a peace should have been neglected.

Such was this celebrated and unfortunate negotiation with Austria, which, commenced as it was under the influence of the most disastrous illusions, was conducted with a want of tact which, when we consider the natural keenness of Napoleon's intellect, can only be explained as being the result of passion.

And now the roar of the cannons was heard along a line of one hundred and fifty leagues in extent, stretching from Königsstein to Hamburg; and Napoleon, aroused by the clamour of arms, speedily forgot in the consideration of the vast military plans from which he expected far more effectual results the meetings and messages of diplomatists. We have now reached

the point in our narrative at which it will be advisable to examine the plan and the nature of the force with which he was prepared to enter upon the second part of the campaign of Saxony; but to enable us to enter upon this inquiry with the greater readiness, it will be necessary in the first place to consider what were the plan and forces of his enemies.

It will be remembered that it had been agreed by the allies at Trachenberg that three principal armies should march against Napoleon, acting on the offensive, but with great caution; and that that one of the three against which Napoleon might direct his own movements should slacken its march, whilst the two others should endeavour to throw themselves on his flank and rear, and crush the lieutenants to whom he should have entrusted their defence. These three armies, which were to be severally, the Bohemian, the Silesian, and the army of the north, would number, it was hoped, including the Italian and Bavarian corps, five hundred and seventy-five thousand active troops, accompanied by one thousand five hundred pieces of cannon, without taking into account two hundred and fifty thousand men who were to form a reserve, stationed at various points in Bohemia, Poland, and Old Prussia. And these enormous numbers had now been almost realised, for the armistice of Pleiswitz, in addition to its having been the means of leading Austria to join them, had enabled the allies to double the number of their troops.

The forces of the coalition had been distributed as follows. About one hundred and twenty thousand troops, half of whom were veterans, were posted in Bohemia at the foot of the mountains which separate this province from Saxony, and ready to penetrate their defiles. Seventy thousand Russians under Barclay de Tolly, and sixty thousand Prussians under General Kleist, had passed, as soon as war had been declared by Austria against France, from Silesia into Bohemia, and formed with the Austrian troops the great army which was intended to turn the French position at Dresden by a march into Saxony. The *point de mire* of this army, which was called the Bohemian army, was Leipsic, and the allies supposed that it would be impossible for Napoleon, attacked in front on the Elbe by two other armies, to resist so formidable an assault as that which they were prepared to make on his rear with two hundred and fifty thousand men. Out of deference towards Austria, and in accordance with the plan of conciliating her as much as possible, the command in chief of the army of Bohemia was entrusted to Prince Schwarzenberg, who had negotiated the marriage of Marie Louise, had commanded the Austrian auxiliary corps in 1812, and had been but recently sent on a mission to Paris, and who was somewhat embarrassed by having filled offices of so opposite a

character, as well as much terrified at the idea of encountering such an opponent as Napoleon, although he had spoken much in the Aulic Council of the weakness of the French army, and consoled himself for the annoyances of any false position by the pleasures of gratified pride. It was indeed a distinguished honour for him to be entrusted with so great a command in the presence of the allied sovereigns; and to a certain extent he was not unworthy of it; for he was prudent, had some experience in warfare on a large scale, and was endowed with a tact which qualified him for dealing with the various elements which composed the coalition.

To the flattery of the Austrian court involved in this appointment was added another act of respect, which was equally well calculated to gratify it. By a secret article of the *traité de subsides* concluded with the British government at Reichenbach, it had been agreed that it should be afforded certain pecuniary assistance should it take part in the war, and Lord Cathcart, who had already arrived in Prague, had already drawn bills upon London for the purpose of supplying it as speedily as possible with the financial resources which it required.

Next to this, the principal army, came that of Silesia, which was composed of the Russian corps of Generals Langeron and St. Priest, amounting together to more than forty thousand men, the Prussian corps of General d'York, which numbered almost thirty-eight thousand men, and lastly, another Russian corps, of some seventeen or eighteen thousand men under General Sacken. This army, commanded by the impetuous Blucher, and numbering almost a hundred thousand men, was to cross the boundary line which had separated, during the armistice, the hostile forces, to pass the Katzbach and the Bober, and to drive us back upon Bautzen, should Napoleon himself not be in the field in that direction. Blucher was strongly recommended to act with the greatest prudence; but surrounded as he was by the most ardent Prussian officers, besides having as the chief of his staff General Gneisenau, a man of an excitable and impulsive temperament, he was not accompanied by persons in the least likely to remind him of these wise instructions.

The army of the north, assembled around Berlin, was the third of the active armies, and was to be commanded by the Prince-Royal of Sweden, numbering altogether about one hundred and fifty thousand men of all nations. It comprised twenty-five thousand Swedes and Germans, under General Steding; eighteen thousand Russians, under Prince Woronzow; ten thousand light horse, partly Cossacks, under Wintzingerode; forty thousand Prussians, under General Bulow; thirty thousand more Prussians, under General Tauenzien, the

latter being intended more especially to blockade fortresses; and finally, a mixed body of twenty-five thousand troops, under General Walmoden, composed of Englishmen, Hanoverians, Germans, men from the Hanseatic towns and from all the provinces subject to our rule. One portion of this numerous army was to remain before the fortresses of Dantzic, Custrin, and Stettin, whilst another was to watch Hamburg, and a third, which was to be the most considerable one, and numbered eighty thousand men, was to move upon Magdeburg, pass the Elbe there, if possible, and threaten Napoleon's left flank; the army of Bohemia at the same time threatening his right.

To these three active armies, which numbered five hundred thousand men, and were accompanied by fifteen hundred pieces of cannon, were added a body of twenty-five thousand troops, intended to watch Bavaria; and another of fifty thousand, which was to make head against Prince Eugène on the side of Italy. And we may here mention, that whilst Austria attached but little importance to what took place in this latter region, considering, and with reason, that the fate of the world would be determined on the Elbe between Dresden, Bautzen, Magdeburg, and Leipsic, she nevertheless considered it quite possible that Prince Eugène's troops might enter her capital, and removed from it, therefore, what it contained of value in the way of archives, arms, and objects of art.

To the troops above enumerated must be added the reserves which Austria possessed to the amount of sixty thousand men, between Presburg, Vienna, and Lintz; the Russian troops, to the number of one hundred thousand men, under General Benningsen, and Prince Labanoff, in Poland; and the ninety thousand Prussian recruits who had now completed their drill.

We may now judge how far Napoleon had been in error when he accepted the armistice of Pleiswitz, which he had signed, in the first place, in compliance with the urgent entreaties of the Austrian court, and because he believed that whilst the two months during which it lasted would enable him to increase his armies by two hundred thousand men, they would have the effect of swelling the ranks of the allies by only half that number. The contrary had been the result; for whilst he had but added one hundred and fifty thousand men to his troops, the coalition had added to theirs, if we include the Austrian forces, almost four hundred thousand. He had not failed, however, to make active and admirable use of these two months, and his plans were well calculated to defeat those of his enemies.

The position of the Elbe had been selected by Napoleon, as we have already stated, as the best, and indeed, the only advantageous one. Dresden, as well fortified as it could be



since its walls had been thrown down, was to be the central point of his operations, and his principal establishment. Seven or eight leagues to his right, at the point where the Elbe flows through the mountains of Bohemia into Saxony, he possessed the fortified posts of Königstein and Lilienstein, together with a solid bridge and magazines, which enabled him to manoeuvre at will on either bank of the river. On his left at Torgau, fifteen leagues below Dresden, he had fortified works, provisions, and bridges; and the same at Wittenberg and Magdeburg; the latter being a vast fortress, regularly fortified, in which he had placed, besides a great mass of ammunition and provisions, all the sick and wounded of the spring campaign. The improvised post of Werben protected the gap between Magdeburg and Hamburg; and lastly, Hamburg covered the Lower Elbe. It was doubtless possible for the enemy to cross the Elbe between Magdeburg and Hamburg, because the space between these two places was but imperfectly defended by the works at Werben; but this was an enterprise which no enemy could accomplish so long as the great army commanded by Napoleon in person should not have lost its point d'appui of Dresden.

Divining the projects of the enemy as thoroughly as though he had been present at the Trachenberg conferences, Napoleon had perceived very clearly that he would have to encounter three separate armies: one on his right in Bohemia, one in front in Silesia, and one on his left, threatening the Elbe, between Magdeburg and Hamburg; and the arrangements which he had made to meet those several attacks were such as left nothing to desire. The new corps of Marshal St. Cyr, numbering thirty thousand men, and composed of four divisions, had been recently brought from Mayence to Dresden, and was now posted at Königstein, on the left bank of the Elbe, in such a manner as to close the avenues by which the chief army of the allies might descend from Bohemia into Saxony, on our rear. The corps of General Vandamme, which also numbered thirty thousand men, detached from the army of Marshal Davout, and brought from Hamburg to Dresden, had been posted above the corps of Marshal St. Cyr, but beyond the Elbe, so as to guard, on the right of this river, the defiles of the mountains of Bohemia opening into Lusatia. Somewhat further in Lusatia, but still at the foot of the mountains of Bohemia, at the defile of Zittau, were posted the corps of Poniatowski and that of Marshal Victor, the formation of which had been completed during the suspension of arms. Finally, still further, in Silesia, on the line which had divided the belligerent troops during the armistice, on the Katzbach and the Bober, were the four corps of Macdonald (the 11th), of Lauriston (the 5th), of Ney (the

3rd), of Marmont (the 6th), numbering together a hundred thousand men. In the rear, close to Bautzen, were the imperial guard, which had been raised during the armistice from twelve to forty-eight thousand men, and the three cavalry corps of reserve of Generals Latour-Maubourg, Sebastiani, and Kellermann, composed of twenty-four thousand well-mounted troops. On the left three corps, those of Oudinot (the 12th), of Bertrand (the 4th), of Reynier (the 7th), were charged with the task of opposing the army of the north, commanded by Bernadotte.

His troops having been thus posted, Napoleon resolved to prepare in the following manner for all the eventualities of this formidable campaign. The army of the Prince of Schwarzenberg, which was by much the most numerous, and the one which threatened our right flank, might descend by two paths—namely, in our rear by the great Peterswalde route, or in front of us by the road leading from Bohemia into Lusatia, and passing through the Zittau defile. It could only approach by one of these two paths, and Napoleon was equally prepared for its appearance by either. Marshal St. Cyr, with his four divisions, occupied on this side of the Elbe the Peterswalde causeway; one of his divisions being *de garde* at the bridge thrown across between the rocks of Königstein and Lilienstein, whilst two others occupied the Camp de Pirna, which commanded the great Peterswalde road, and the fourth, with General Pajol's light cavalry, watched all the inferior roads by which the Dresden position might be turned. Should the enemy, therefore, attempt to descend on the rear of Dresden, either for the purpose of attacking that city or of moving upon Leipsic, Marshal St. Cyr, after having taken due advantage of the facilities offered by the nature of the ground to delay the march of the allies as much as possible, would throw garrisons into the forts of Königstein and Lilienstein, and then fall back upon Dresden, when there was every reason to suppose that he would be able to maintain his ground for at least a few days in an entrenched camp already sedulously prepared. In any case, arrangements had been made so as to provide him with prompt and decided support; for within forty-eight hours General Vandamme would be able to carry to his aid his three divisions, severally posted at Stolpen, Rumburg, and Bautzen; and in forty-eight hours more, that is, four days after the appearance of the enemy, Napoleon himself would be able to march to Dresden from Görlitz with forty-eight thousand men of the guard, twenty-four thousand of the cavalry reserve, and twenty-four thousand of the corps of Marshal Victor, and thus raise the number of our troops at Dresden to some one hundred and seventy thousand.

Should the enemy, on the other hand, descend from Bohemia into Lusatia, not on this side of the Elbe but beyond it, not in

Napoleon's rear but in front of him, and debouch by Zittau upon Görlitz or Bautzen, the same arrangements would render a prompt concentration of troops equally easy. Napoleon had resolved to post at the Zittau defile Poniatowski's corps, which numbered twelve thousand men, ready to support the corps of Marshal Victor, whose troops it would raise to thirty thousand, posted in a strong and carefully selected position; when within twelve hours they could be joined by the cavalry which were at Görlitz, and the division Vandamme, which was at Rumburg; and where, within twelve hours more, they could also be joined by Vandamme's two other divisions, and one of the four corps established on the Bober.

Should neither of the two hypotheses, however, in respect to which these precautions were taken, be realised, and should the army of Bohemia, leaving a corps in Bohemia, join its principal mass to that of Silesia, and attack us in front with two hundred and fifty thousand men on the Bober, the four corps of Ney, Lauriston, Marmont, and Macdonald, forming a total of one hundred thousand men, might either maintain their ground on the Bober, or fall back on the Neisse and the Spree, and be there reinforced by the guard, the cavalry reserve, and the troops under Victor, Poniatowski, and Vandamme. And thus in the event of the realisation of the third proposition, which was the only imaginable one after the other two, we should meet the enemy with a force equal to his own, even without making use of the troops under Marshal St. Cyr.

There still remained, indeed, one other hypothesis, for which Napoleon had purposely refrained from taking any precautionary measures, and this was, that the enemy, determining to turn him in a still bolder manner, should descend by the Leipsic route, and daringly endeavour to place themselves between the grand army and the Rhine. This was an hypothesis which caused Napoleon little anxiety, and at which, indeed, he smiled. "*It is not from the Rhine, but from the Elbe,*" he observed with rare penetration, "*that I have to take care that I am not cut off.*" The enemy, he said, who should venture to advance between him and the Rhine would never return; whilst the hostile army which should succeed in establishing itself between him and the Elbe would cut him off from his real base of operations. Who, indeed, would dare to march upon the Rhine leaving Napoleon behind him unvanquished, and at the head of four hundred thousand troops?

Having thus prepared on his right and front to meet the two armies of Bohemia and Silesia, Napoleon had also made preparations on his left for holding in check the army of the north, and also for accomplishing an object which he considered of great importance, and which was to enter the capital of

Prussia in triumph, in the person of one of his lieutenants, and to exact there a vengeance which, avoiding cruelty, should be of the most humiliating nature to the public feeling of Germany. He had directed Marshal Oudinot to march, with his own corps, those of Generals Bertrand and Reynier, and the cavalry reserve of the Duke of Padua, from Luckau upon Berlin; and as this force, which was about sixty-five or sixty-six thousand strong, might be reinforced en route by General Gerard, who was posted in advance at Magdeburg, with about eight or ten thousand men of the garrison of that place and five thousand of the division Dombrowski, it would number nearly eighty thousand men, and have nothing to fear, either from the skill or the forces of the Prince-Royal of Sweden, who could not bring actually on the field of battle more than ninety thousand men; and who, moreover, would soon have to face another formidable enemy in the person of Marshal Davout, who was ready to issue from Hamburg at the head of twenty-five thousand French and ten thousand Danish troops, and threaten Berlin by Mecklenburg, whilst Oudinot should advance towards it by Lusatia. There was the greatest probability, therefore, that Napoleon, whilst holding in check in his front and right the gigantic forces of the coalition, would be able to enter Berlin by his left, and thus have the opportunity of punishing Prussia for her desertion, and the Prince of Sweden for his treason, and of effecting a communication with his garrison on the Oder and the Vistula;—a result which would be doubtless of the most illustrious nature, and might well inflame Napoleon's imagination; but the movement which he had directed to be made by his left was a very extended one: the various corps by whom it was to be executed were widely distant from each other, and their co-operation depended upon a number of circumstances which could scarcely result without exception in our favour. His generals, without having lost their wonted courage, had yet lost that feeling of confidence which is so powerful an ally in critical situations; his troops were young and mixed; and Bernadotte's troops, whom they would have to encounter in the field, although of various nationalities, were bound together by that most powerful of all ties, a common feeling. When we add that, should one of his lieutenants be vanquished he would have to march a considerable distance to his aid, we must admit that at this point, and this only, Napoleon's skilful plan was faulty.

A natural result of the defect here pointed out was, that the four corps which guarded his front in advance of the Elbe were removed too far from Dresden. From the banks of the Bober, where were posted the corps of Ney, Marmont, Macdonald, and Lauriston, to the banks of the Elbe, or, in

other words, from Löwenberg to Dresden, was a distance equivalent to six days' march, a distance too great to allow Napoleon time to support with his reserve the corps which were at Löwenberg, and also those which were at Dresden; for should he be summoned to the one place, some great disaster might happen to one of his lieutenants at the other during the six days which must elapse before he could arrive to his support. In fact, to manœuvre with success concentrically around Dresden, as he had formerly manœuvred around Verona, with a reserve posted at the central point of the circle of operations, and carried as it might be required to all the points of its circumference, the circle should have been smaller, and its radii consequently of less extent. And this defect was not the result of inadvertence on the part of Napoleon, but of that over-eagerness to lay his grasp upon Berlin and the Vistula which had already perverted his policy, as it now spoiled his military combinations.

Napoleon's forces were far from being equal to those of the coalition. The corps of St. Cyr, Vandamme, Victor, Poniatowski grouped on his right; those of Ney, Marmont, Macdonald, Lauriston ranged on his front, together with the guard and cavalry reserve posted in his centre, would form an army of two hundred and seventy-two thousand men of all arms ready to take the field. The troops of Oudinot, Gerard, and Davout, marching upon Berlin, formed another of one hundred and ten or one hundred and fifteen thousand, and thus raised to three hundred and eighty thousand at most the total number of troops with whom we were able to meet the coalition. And if we even add the twenty thousand men in Bavaria, the sixty thousand in Italy, and the ninety thousand men posted in the principal fortresses, we shall only enumerate a force of five hundred and fifty thousand troops, which is still very inferior to the eight hundred thousand at the service of the coalition. The reserves of the allies were, it is true, comprised in this force of eight hundred thousand men; but as Napoleon could not at the most draw more than fifty thousand men from his reserves for active service in the field, he could not, in any case, meet the eight hundred thousand men of the coalition with more than six hundred thousand. This difference of strength, however, would not have prevented him from being victorious had the moral strength been on his side instead, as was unfortunately the case, against him. But the fact was, that his adversaries, exasperated to the utmost, were resolved either to conquer or to die; and his own troops, heroic as they were, were inspired only by feelings of honour, and were led by generals whose confidence had been destroyed, and who began to feel that we were in the wrong, not only with respect to Europe, but also with respect to France and good sense.

Having inspected the Königstein and Lilienstein positions, and that taken by St. Cyr and Vandamme on his rear and right, Napoleon proceeded on the 15th to Görlitz, where he found the guard and the cavalry reserve. From thence he had proceeded to visit the Zittau gorge, the defence of which was entrusted to Poniatowski and Victor; and after he had established Poniatowski upon a mountain named Eckartsberg, which was opposite the mouth of the defile, and offered means of barring its passage, he advanced some leagues, escorted by the light cavalry of his guard, for the purpose of reconnoitring a country which it was quite possible he should at a future time have to traverse; and to learn what was the direction pursued by the enemy, of whose movements he knew nothing, because the thick wall of mountains which separated him from them on his right was in the nature of a curtain which it was extremely difficult to penetrate. He listened, therefore, with extreme attention to the slightest rumours afloat, and as is usual in such cases received only the most contradictory reports. All accounts, however, agreed in stating that a corps of the Prussian and Russian army had passed from Silesia into Bohemia for the purpose of co-operating with the Austrian army. This was the corps which, together with the Austrian troops, was to form the grand army which was to be under the command of Prince Schwarzenberg.

On receiving this information, Napoleon entertained for a moment the idea of throwing himself into Bohemia, at the head of a hundred thousand men, by the Zittau route, and attacking the Prussian and Russian troops before their junction with the Austrians. By advancing rapidly on the right towards Leitmeritz, he would have been able to cut in two the long line which the coalition troops would occupy before being assembled around Commotau; and it would have been then quite possible for him to strike, at the very opening of the campaign, some terrible blow; but it was quite possible, on the other hand, that when he had entered Bohemia he might miss the troops of the allies, already concentrated on his right between Töplitz and Commotau, and consequently able not only to resist his attack, but also by descending upon it by Peterswalde to reach Dresden before he could return thither himself; whilst, should he find them, and give them battle upon his road, he would have to engage them in a position which, whether he were victorious or vanquished, must be highly disadvantageous to him; for if he should vanquish the enemy, he would be unable to pursue them into the interior of Bohemia; and should they vanquish him, he would have to repass the Zittau defile in their presence. Napoleon, therefore, had little inclination to carry out the idea above mentioned, although it was warmly

supported by Marshal St. Cyr, and would only have done so had he received most reliable information that sixty or eighty thousand Prussians and Russians were within distance still separated from the hundred and twenty thousand Austrians whom they were to join.

Mounting his horse on the morning of the 19th of August, Napoleon entered Bohemia at the head of some thousands of cavalry, and plunging into the gorges beyond Gabel showed himself at the entrance of the fair basin of Bohemia to its astonished inhabitants. The result of the inquiries which he now made was to inform him that the Prussian and Russian troops coming from Silesia traversed the foot of the mountains in the interior of Bohemia, for the purpose of joining the Austrians and of descending, probably, into Saxony, in the rear of Dresden. In executing this movement the allies would traverse the Elbe between Leitmeritz and Aussig; and everything tended to show that they were already either on the banks of the river, or beyond it in the environs of Töplitz. The moment, therefore, for throwing himself upon them, even had such a measure been at any time advisable, being now past, it was necessary that Napoleon should return to Saxony as speedily as possible, for the purpose of combating the enemy around Dresden on the battlefield which he had selected with so much care. Napoleon, however, took pains to make the fact of his presence amongst them thus known to the inhabitants, in order that the rumour of it might reach the headquarters of the allies, his reasons for this course being as follows.

It was evident that the plan of the allies, after they should have crossed the Elbe in Bohemia, was to enter Saxony and to descend upon Dresden, and after they should have gained possession of this city, to advance upon Leipsic, for the purpose of taking up a position between the Rhine and the French army. The adoption of this course by the allies would be in every way favourable to us, for by acting thus in Napoleon's rear they would expose themselves to the danger of having him upon their lines of communication, and would be in a position in which the loss of a battle must involve almost certain destruction. This being the case, it was important that Napoleon should make a vigorous attack upon the army of Silesia which was before him in order to render it incapable for a time of active operations, and then to return to devote his whole attention to the operations around Dresden. To ensure the success of such a project, it would be advisable to delay the onward march of the allies for a day or two, since he had to hasten upon the Bober before returning to the Elbe; and there could be no better means of causing this delay than Napoleon's presence in Bohemia, since his presence there could not fail to excite

the allies to a thousand disquieting, or at least embarrassing conjectures.

Having returned to Zittau by the defiles of the Riesen Gebirge, Napoleon employed the following day, the 20th, in posting the corps of Poniatowski and Victor at the entrance of the Zittau defile in such a manner that those corps might be able to maintain themselves for three days at least against the most violent attacks. Napoleon also took care to secure their line of communication with General Vandamme, who had been posted between Zittau and Dresden in the direction of Stolpen, that he might be able to move in a single day either upon Zittau or Dresden. Having completed these several measures, Napoleon resolved to await during one more day the complete manifestation of the enemy's designs; being at the same time entirely free from any sentiments of fear, the precautions which he had taken in all directions being such as to relieve him of all anxiety. In fact, the eighty thousand men on the side of Berlin, marching under the command of Marshal Oudinot, and supported by the thirty-five thousand of Marshal Davout; the troops lying in wait under St. Cyr and Vandamme on the two banks of the Elbe; the two corps which guarded the gorges leading into Bohemia at Zittau; the hundred thousand men who awaited on the Bober, under Marshal Ney, the moment when the enemy should attempt to cross it; and finally, the guard and cavalry reserve, posted at Görlitz in such positions as to be immediately ready to defend the threatened points, formed altogether an admirably woven web, in the midst of which its contriver was ready at any moment to pounce upon any who might venture to touch its extremities.

On his return to Görlitz, Napoleon received information there that the army of Silesia had invaded on the 15th the neutral territory which it should have respected as such until the 17th, and that it was advancing in the direction of Bohemia. Napoleon immediately set in motion the cavalry and three divisions of his guard, leaving the others at Görlitz, and made arrangements for being on the Bober on the following day, the 21st.

Hostilities having commenced in Silesia before the period assigned for their resumption by the armistice, the four corps under the command of Ney had scarcely left their cantonments when they found themselves in the presence of the enemy. Two of these corps, those of Macdonald and Marmont, were on the Bober, the first on the right towards Löwenberg, the second on the left in the direction of Buntzlau. The two others were beyond these, on the Katzbach, and in a position of still greater danger, that of Lauriston being in the environs of Goldberg, and that of Ney between Leignitz and Hainau.



Being almost turned by the sudden appearance of Langeron's corps on their right flank, those two corps were indeed in a state of extreme peril; but Lauriston's corps, falling back from the Katzbach on the Bober with great coolness and energy, rejoined Macdonald at Löwenberg without accident; and Ney, who was the most advanced towards our left, instead of simply falling back upon Buntzlau for the purpose of passing the Bober at that point, boldly deployed between the Katzbach and the Bober, and braved the attack of Blucher, who was moving onward against Löwenberg. On perceiving his position Blucher turned his forces against him, and Löwenberg being thus freed from the danger of imminent attack, Ney descended upon Buntzlau, and passing the Bober, there joined his forces to those of Marmont.

On the 20th our four corps were behind the Bober, and Napoleon, who arrived on the morning of the 21st, was anxious to engage the enemy without further delay. Blucher's forces, including those of the Russian general Sacken, who had remained a little in the rear on his right, numbered about one hundred thousand. Napoleon, who had more than one hundred and thirty thousand, employed the morning in directing the construction of wooden bridges across the Bober, and giving the necessary orders to ensure the execution by his army of a prompt and vigorous march, since he had no time to lose, expecting, as he did, to be speedily recalled to his rear by the movements of the grand army at Bohemia. He consequently resolved to debouch from Löwenberg with Macdonald and Lauriston, passing the Bober at that point, and drawing Ney and Marmont, who were to cross the Bober at Buntzlau, upon his left.

Towards the middle of the day our troops crossed the Bober at Löwenberg, and moved rapidly forward; the division Maison, which formed our *tête de colonne*, driving before it the troops under General d'York without allowing them a moment's respite. The whole of Lauriston's corps followed, supported by that of Macdonald. On our left the Marshals Ney and Marmont debouched from Buntzlau, closing in upon our centre. And now Blucher, finding himself thus vigorously attacked, and suspecting that Napoleon was in his front, acted in accordance with the instructions given to him to run no risk when there was a prospect of encountering his formidable adversary in person, and fell back behind a small stream named the Hainau, and flowing between the Bober and the Katzbach.

On the 22nd, Napoleon continued his march on the offensive; the corps of Lauriston and Macdonald advancing directly upon Goldberg, for the purpose of driving Blucher beyond the Katzbach, whilst Ney and Marmont still moved on our left with the

same object. Animated by the presence of Napoleon, the troops were inspired with the utmost ardour, and speedily compelled the enemy to abandon with considerable loss the little stream behind which they had taken refuge, to repass the Katzbach, and to take up a position at Goldberg.

It had now become evident that it was not with the troops under Blücher that the principal action would take place; and in fact, on that very evening, Napoleon received from Marshal St. Cyr information which showed very evidently that the main army of the allies was debouching by Peterswalde upon the rear of Dresden, with the intention either of seizing this town, or of advancing upon Leipzig with the audacious idea of placing themselves between the French and the Rhine. And thus was realised that one of Napoleon's two hypotheses which was the most desirable of the two, and for which he had most carefully prepared. He immediately stopped his guard, which was still on its march, and which fortunately had not yet passed Löwenberg, in order that it might, after a brief halt, take the road to Dresden. He also sent in the same direction the corps of Marshal Marmont and a great portion of the cavalry reserve; and at the same time wrote to General Vandamme and Marshal Victor directing them to fall back upon the Elbe, leaving Prince Poniatowski at the Zittau gorges.

Having given these orders during the evening of the 22nd, Napoleon was desirous that on the following morning the corps of Lauriston, Macdonald, and Ney, which with the cavalry of General Sebastiani composed a mass of eighty thousand men at least, should once more attack the enemy and drive it beyond the Katzbach; and at daybreak accordingly Lauriston's corps on the right, that of Macdonald in the centre, and the cavalry of Latour-Maubourg on the left, deployed along the Katzbach, whilst Ney, three leagues lower down, advanced with his own corps and Sebastiani's cavalry in front of Leignitz. Blücher had posted the Russian troops under Langeron, and the Prussian troops under d'York, behind the Katzbach and on the heights of Wolfsberg. The division Gerard, throwing itself upon the banks of the river in the direction of Niederau, had a desperate conflict with the Prussian division under Prince Mecklenburg, and eventually compelled them to fall back beyond the Katzbach, which it crossed in their wake. In the meantime, General Lauriston having effected his passage in the direction of Seyfnau, attacked the Wolfsberg heights, which he three times succeeded in wresting from the Russians, and as many times was forced to resign. But a final effort, made by the 135th of the division Rochambeau, gave them into our hands and decided the action in our favour. And Blücher, finding himself to be out-flanked two or three leagues on his right by the movement of

Marshal Ney upon Leignitz, fell back in all haste towards Jauer.

This useless violation of international law cost the Prussians a loss of some eight thousand men, and ourselves about half that number; but this result did not, unfortunately for us, shake the courage of our enemy, who was fighting with all the vehemence of despair. Napoleon, who had experienced the inconvenience of leaving several marshals together when he was not himself present amongst them, and who foresaw the imminence of desperate battles for which it was well to have Marshal Ney at hand, resolved to make this marshal accompany himself, to confide the command of the third corps to General Souham, and to leave the troops on the Bober under the command in chief of Marshal Macdonald, whom he directed to leave his light troops in observation between the Bober and the Katzbach, but to encamp with the bulk of his forces behind the Bober itself, between Löwenberg and Buntzlau, and to establish posts of communication on the right in the Bohemian mountains, on the left in the plains of Lusatia, so as to be constantly informed of the enemy's movements. The principal tasks entrusted to him were, in the first place, to defend the Bober against Blucher, and in the next, to intercept the routes leading from Bohemia into Prussia, so as to check the advance of the detachments which the enemy might possibly throw in the direction of Berlin against the corps of Marshal Oudinot. And in adopting these measures Napoleon was led by his anxiety to expedite Oudinot's march on Berlin to make the most injudicious sacrifices; for Macdonald, left at forty leagues distance from Dresden, although free for a moment from the enemy, might be once more attacked by him with renewed vigour, and even incur great danger before aid could possibly reach him.

Having taken these measures, and seen Blucher in full retreat upon Jauer, Napoleon set out about noon for Görlitz, where he found an abundance of news from Dresden, and learned that the King of Saxony, the inhabitants, and the generals to whom the defence of this important post had been entrusted, were terrified at the immense masses of hostile troops which were advancing from Bohemia and descending the mountains in the rear of the Saxon capital.

The grand army of the allies, which, composed of Prussian, Russian, and Austrian troops to the number of two hundred and fifty thousand men, was to turn the position of the Elbe by Bohemia, had in fact executed the plan arranged at Trachenberg, and had debouched into Saxony by all the defiles of the Erzgebirge. But the troops had scarcely, however, set out on their march when the instability which was incident to

the military tactics of the allies, and which resulted from the want of any real commander-in-chief amongst their generals, led to a modification of the plan determined upon at Trachenberg. The nominal command in chief had been conferred upon the Prince Schwarzenberg as a means of propitiating Austria; but the Emperor Alexander regretted in his heart that he had not taken it himself, and the more so when Generals Moreau and Jomini arrived in his camp with reinforcements which would, he believed, carry the affairs of the allies to a glorious issue.

General Moreau, who, as we have already said, returned from America on hearing the rumour of Napoleon's disasters in Russia without any other object save such as might be involved in a vague hope of honourably re-entering his country, had formed a plan which was not without some chance of success. Having learned that the Emperor Alexander had more than a hundred thousand French prisoners, all deeply exasperated against the author of the expedition to Moscow, he had conceived the plan of arming forty or fifty thousand of them, transporting them in English ships to Picardy, and marching them upon Paris, the result of which would be, he maintained, the overthrow of the imperial throne, provided the allies would furnish him with a treaty of peace, which should leave France free to choose her own form of government, and secure to her the possession of a territory extending to her natural limits, the Alps and the Rhine. Entirely without any connection with the Bourbons, or any sympathies in their favour, he nevertheless admitted that endeavours should be made to reconcile this ancient family with the French Revolution, and that it should be recalled for the purpose of establishing a government which should be at once firm and liberal, and should put an end to the protracted troubles with which France had been afflicted. It was under the influence of these ideas that he had come to Stockholm, where his old comrade, Bernadotte, had covertly excited still further his feelings of exasperation, and then sent him to the Russian headquarters. Alexander received the exile with every testimony of respect and friendship, and calmed the scruples which he still felt by declaring to him that the allies had no desire to deprive France of any portion of her greatness; that they were quite ready to offer her the fair conditions of the treaty of Juneville; and that they had no intention of imposing upon her any particular form of government, being anxious, on the contrary, to acknowledge that which it might itself choose, even supposing it were that of a Republic. Rejecting as impracticable the plan of arming the French prisoners, he cautiously led the unhappy Moreau to adopt the resolution, not indeed of serving against France, but of remaining with the

sovereigns who were fighting against her; an apparent difference which was sufficient to deceive Moreau, but which had no real foundation. To complete his seduction to the cause of the allies, Alexander made use of his sister, the Grand Duchess Catherine, widow of the Duke of Oldenburg, a princess of remarkable spirit and personal attractions; and she, as well as her brother, treating Moreau as a friend, and overwhelming him with adroit flattery, assisted in inducing him to enter a path on which he was to meet with the cruellest of all deaths, being that which was to take from him with his life, if not his glory, at least his innocence.

From the time that Moreau had been by his side, Alexander regretted that he did not himself possess the commandership in chief of the allied forces, in which case he would have made Moreau the chief of his staff, and with his aid have conducted the operations of the war. But as it was impossible to make Prince Schwarzenberg receive Moreau, either as a superior or a subordinate, the latter found himself in the camp of the allies in the character of a private friend of the Emperor Alexander's, and already cruelly punished for the fault which he had committed by having to endure a position in the midst of the enemies of his country which was false, awkward, and almost humiliating.

General Jomini, a Swiss by birth, an excellent military writer, and possessed of no slight merits as a staff officer, had rendered to the French army at Ulm, the Beresina, and Bautzen services for which he had been very poorly recompensed at Bautzen; especially after having pointed out to Marshal Ney the line of march which it was most advisable to take, he had received, instead of a reward, a punishment which he owed to the prince major-general, whose susceptibilities he had frequently wounded. Sensitive and irritable, and having frequently desired to pass from the French service to that of Russia, which had not failed to show considerable readiness to receive him, he had at length, on the occasion of this last insult, given a loose to his anger, and during the armistice passed over to the Russians, without, as has been said, betraying to them plans of which he was ignorant, or failing in his duty to his country, since he was a Swiss, but committing nevertheless an error in not subjecting his private causes of offence, even if well founded, to the claims of an association in arms, and preparing for himself by the course which he adopted griefs which were destined to embitter his life. Received with all honour by Alexander, he gave free expression to his opinions, displeasing the generals of the allied forces by speaking in praise of Napoleon and the French, whom he was already almost sorry to have quitted, and censuring without reserve all the plans which had been formed at

Trachenberg. He had not much trouble in proving to Alexander that the plan of marching upon Leipsic was, for many reasons, unadvisable; and General Moreau coinciding in his views on the subject, it was resolved to renounce this project, and instead of leaning to the left to incline to the right, and to move upon the banks of the Elbe. The two first columns, being that which had passed by Peterswalde, and that which had passed by Zinnwald and Altenberg, had marched close to Dresden, but it was necessary to draw back the third by Marienberg and Sayda upon Dippoldiswalde, and the fourth by Zwickau and Chemnitz upon Tharandt. The allies had thus moved towards Dresden without having any very precise ideas what they were to do in this new position, which, however, had the advantage of enabling them at any time to advance to the capture of Dresden, the loss of which could not fail to be of the greatest possible detriment to the French cause. Whilst they were executing this transverse movement from left to right along the foot of the Erzgebirge, the allies received information of the appearance of Napoleon in Bohemia; a circumstance which gave rise to an apprehension that he might be about to march upon Prague, and rendered more evident than ever the advantageousness of a retrograde movement on the part of the allies along the road towards the Elbe.

It was thus that the grand army of the allies came to deploy its imposing masses around the fair capital of Saxony; the column which was first perceived being the Russian column under Wittgenstein, which, descending the nearest to the Elbe by the Peterswalde route, encountered Marshal St. Cyr in front of the Camp de Pirna. What is called the Camp de Pirna consists of a very elevated plateau, the sides of which are at almost every point perpendicular, and which, resting on the Elbe, is supported on the left by the fort of Königstein, and on the right by the Château de Sonnenstein and the town of Pirna. The great Bohemian route, running by Peterswalde, passes this plateau at such a distance, that although almost, it is not quite commanded by it; and therefore, although itself impregnable, it does not form in itself an absolute means of shutting up the Peterswalde route. At the same time, it is a position from whence the operations of any enemy following the Peterswalde route may be effectually harassed, if not entirely frustrated.

Marshal St. Cyr, after having thrown the first of his two divisions into the forts of Königstein and Lilienstein, between which a bridge was thrown across the Elbe, had placed the second on the Peterswalde route in such a manner as to delay the enemy's march, and at the same time be able to fall back upon Dresden as had been ordered. In the meantime, the third of Marshal St. Cyr's divisions watched the second débouche,

being that which opens from Töplitz upon Zinnwald, Altenberg, and Dippoldiswalde, and the fourth, posted on the right of Dippoldiswalde, and watching the great Freiberg route, served as a support to General Pajol, who was skirmishing with the advanced guards of the Austrian cavalry, as it came up by the more distant débouches.

On the 23rd August, Marshal St. Cyr having confided to his first division, as we have already said, the defence of the Königstein and Lillienstein forts and all the posts on the banks of the Elbe, fell back in good order upon Dresden, where there were now, therefore, besides the garrison, three divisions of infantry, together with the cavalry under Lheritier and Pajol. And this force, supported by field-works and the fortifications of the city itself, and well provided with artillery, was amply sufficient to afford Marshal St. Cyr the means of disputing the possession of Dresden with the enemy, and to give Napoleon time to execute his manœuvres around it.

It was on this state of things that Napoleon founded his calculations on receiving at Görlitz the details of what had taken place on the side of Dresden. Aware, from the presence of considerable masses of troops in the rear of Dresden, that the allies had adopted the plan which consisted in turning him, advancing upon the left bank of the Elbe and descending into Saxony from Peterswalde, and having foreseen and provided against this movement by posting at Dresden a force sufficient to repulse a first attack, and to hold in check Prince Schwarzenberg's army for some days at least, he now devised one of the most excellent and formidable combinations which were the fruits of his genius, and one which, had it been executed according to his views, might have brought the whole war to a sudden termination.

Napoleon returned from Silesia preceded or followed by the most movable portions of his army, which he made fall back towards the Elbe. The enemy, wishing to turn him, had crossed the Elbe in the interior of Bohemia, under the shelter of the mountains which separate this country from Saxony, and that he might punish them for this rash movement, Napoleon now resolved to ascend as far as Königstein, and after having effected there the passage of the Elbe, to establish himself at Pirna, to intercept the Peterswalde road, to descend on the enemy's rear with one hundred and forty thousand men, to drive him to Dresden, and thus to have him between the French army and the Elbe.

Inflamed by this idea, Napoleon hastened to explain to M. de Bassano, by a letter written in cipher, the formidable plan which he had devised, directing him to keep it secret, but to exert himself to the utmost to conduce to its success.

He wrote also to Marshal St. Cyr, pointing out to him once more all the means of defence presented by the city of Dresden, and then took up his quarters, on the 25th of August, at Stolpen, on the right bank of the stream, and an equal distance from Königstein and Dresden.

Established at Stolpen, Napoleon made all those arrangements which he considered necessary for the success of his new plan. Vandamme's corps, three divisions strong, had already fallen back upon Königstein at the first appearance of the grand army of the allies, the half of one of its divisions, that under General Teste, having spread along the Elbe, from Königstein to Dresden, for the purpose of preventing the enemy from repassing the river, and confining them to the left bank; whilst the two others passed over by the bridge thrown across the stream between Königstein and Lilienstein, to attack the Camp de Pirna, under which the enemy had defiled without occupying it in force, to take possession of it, to effect a junction there with the first division of St. Cyr, which had been left at Pirna, and to take up a position *à cheval* on the Peterswalde road. That Vandamme might have four whole divisions at his disposal, Napoleon borrowed of Marshal Victor the brigade of the Prince de Reuss, and adding to it Corbineau's cavalry, thus raised the forces at Vandamme's disposal to more than forty thousand men, of whom thirty-six thousand were infantry, and almost five thousand cavalry. He posted, in the next place, the whole of his guard and Marshal Victor, who had returned from Zittau, around Stolpen in such a manner that they might be able to follow General Vandamme as soon as he should be master of the Camp de Pirna, hastened the march of Marshal Marmont, and had as many boats as possible gathered together for the purpose of throwing three additional bridges between Königstein and Lilienstein. When these bridges should have been constructed, he would have at his immediate disposal one hundred and twenty thousand men to throw on the enemy's rear; and his intention was, whilst he should himself repass the Elbe at Königstein, to send Latour-Maubourg's cavalry to cross it at Dresden, so as to deceive the Prince de Schwarzenberg, and induce him to suppose that the whole French army was about to debouch by that city. In order that the Elbe, which he desired to make an insurmountable obstacle to, the progress of the enemy, might be more securely guarded, he ordered Marshal St. Cyr, Lheritier's cavalry, and two battalions of infantry to defend the Meissen, situated eight leagues from Dresden; and finally, as he considered that the troops might enjoy a day's repose without danger, since all appeared calm around Dresden, he determined that Vandamme should not pass over the bridge thrown across



the Elbe between Lilienstein and Königstein to attack the Camp de Pirna until the evening of the 26th.

Unfortunately the population of Dresden began to be much excited as it beheld the approach of the coalition troops. From the 23rd to the 25th only the first column, that which had followed the Peterswalde route, was visible; but during the following days the other columns had appeared in their turn and covered the heights which overlooked the city. The last Austrian column was alone absent, for having passed by Carlsbad and Zwickau, its road to Dresden had been longer than that of the others. Alexander's advisers, with Jomini at their head, were eager to attack immediately St. Cyr's three divisions, which they beheld upon the plain, and by entering Dresden in pursuit of them, to destroy at a single blow our whole establishment upon the Elbe. But Moreau, on being consulted, objected that it was improbable that St. Cyr would await in that exposed position the attack of overwhelming masses had he not behind him some support in the shape either of reserves of troops or defensive works, and that it would be highly injudicious to risk a repulse at the very commencement of hostilities. Prince Schwarzenberg declaring, however, in the midst of the discussion, that in any case it would be necessary to defer the attack for a day, since his fourth column had not yet arrived, the decision on the course to be adopted was remitted to the following day.

The accumulation of the troops of the allies around Dresden did not fail to inspire the inhabitants with terror, and message after message was sent to Napoleon urging him to hasten up in person with all his reserves to repulse the formidable attack with which the city was threatened. In reply to these entreaties, Napoleon sent Murat to execute a reconnaissance, the result of which was simply to confirm the fact of the presence of a considerable hostile army around Dresden, which it was apparently about to attack; and upon his being still further urged to proceed thither in person, he wrote to Marshal St. Cyr detailing anew the means by which Dresden might be defended, and to this letter the marshal contented himself with replying that he would do his best, but that in the presence of such masses of hostile troops as were then around him he could not answer for what might be the issue. The necessity, however, of preserving Dresden from the enemy's grasp was so great, that Napoleon, discontented with the marshal's extreme reserve, sent his officer *d'ordonnance*, Gourgaud, to this city that he might be able to give him complete information of the actual state of affairs.

Gourgaud, who was a brave and spirited officer, but unendowed with a judgment sufficiently cool to enable him to fulfil successfully the mission with which he had been entrusted, arrived in

Dresden on the 25th, at a moment when the populace and the court were equally overcome by alarm, when the generals themselves began to lose their ordinary sang-froid, and when the inhabitants, withdrawing en masse from the principal portion of the city, called the Old Town, and exposed, from being situated on the left bank of the Elbe, to the enemy's attack, proceeded to the faubourg on the right bank, called the New Town. In the meantime, Marshal St. Cyr and General Durosnel, who were entrusted with the defence of the city, the one as commander of the 14th corps, and the other as Governor of Dresden, on being closely interrogated by Gourgaud, gave such answers as led him to suppose they had but little confidence in the strength of the position, and induced him, on his return to Stolpen, which took place at eleven o'clock on the same evening, to draw such a picture of the dangers which threatened Dresden as to overcome Napoleon's usually firm judgment, and made him forget the important considerations which he had himself explained to Marshal St. Cyr. Believing, in fact, that he could carry out his first plan only at the expense of sacrificing the old town of Dresden—a sacrifice not only opposed to the dictates of humanity, but also of those of policy, since it could not fail to render our alliance a source of disaster to Saxony—Napoleon now determined, instead of throwing the whole mass of his forces by Königstein upon the enemy's rear, to effect this movement with only the forty thousand under Vandamme, and with a hundred thousand others to debouch directly upon Dresden. And this new plan, although offering fewer advantages than the former, was nevertheless calculated to have very effectual results, and was at the same time less hazardous, since Napoleon by concentrating a hundred thousand men upon Dresden would save it from the enemy, and have the means of vanquishing the enemy under its walls, whilst Vandamme would be posted at Königstein ready to obtain from his victory the greatest possible advantage.

Having determined at midnight, with a promptitude which never ceased to be one of his characteristics, upon his course of action, he immediately gave the necessary orders; moving upon Dresden his old guard which had already arrived in the environs of Stolpen, the cavalry under Latour-Maubourg which had arrived there, and the half of the division Teste which remained on the bank of the Elbe, commanding that they should march throughout the night, so as to reach Dresden by daybreak, and that they should take up a position behind that of Marshal St. Cyr. He gave similar instructions to the guard and to Marshal Marmont, who were yet on the Löwenberg road, and to Marshal Victor, who had quitted Zittau on his way to Königstein; and at the same time explained to General

Vandamme what he would have to do during the following day, the 26th, directing him to march his forty thousand men across the bridge which had been first thrown over the river, between Lilienstein and Königstein, debouch on the left bank of the Elbe, attack and take possession of the Camp de Pirna, and establish himself across the Chaussée de Peterswalde. To these instructions he added the assistance of an enlightened counsellor in the person of General Haxo, whom he directed to become the excitable Vandamme's guide and mentor. Having made these arrangements, he took a few hours' repose, and at day-break set out at a gallop for Dresden, where he arrived at about nine o'clock on the morning of the 26th of August, the first of two justly celebrated days.

The enthusiasm excited amongst the troops and inhabitants on Napoleon's arrival in Dresden was ardent in the extreme; the former receiving him with a species of military fanaticism, and the latter hailing him as the deliverer of their wives and children from the horrors of war. Visiting the King of Saxony for the purpose of supporting his drooping courage, Napoleon exhorted him to banish his fears, and then went to the front of the entrenched camp in order to join Marshal St. Cyr, who was at the head of his troops, and handling them with his accustomed ability.

The principal portion of Dresden being situated on the left bank of the Elbe is that, of course, which we first arrive at on coming from the banks of the Rhine. A series of heights, detached from the mountains of Bohemia, envelop the city, and form around it a species of amphitheatre. It was on this amphitheatre that the allied troops were arrayed, having France behind them as though they had come from it, as our troops had Germany behind them. Our line of defence, resting on the old town, presented a semicircle, while the two extremities rested on the Elbe, the left extremity being at the Pirna faubourg, and the right at the Friedrichstadt faubourg; and it was at the exterior line of this series of defensive works that Marshal St. Cyr had placed his troops. His first division having remained with Vandamme, he had posted the second on the first half of the circumference of the city, extending from the Pirna barrier to the Dippoldiswalde barrier. He had ranged his fourth division on the other half of the circumference, terminating in the Faubourg de Friedrichstadt. In front of the Pirna faubourg was a vast public garden, called the Gross-Garten, which was in relation to the arrangements of the day a strong point in advance of our left; and there Marshal St. Cyr had established his third division, but with the precaution of leaving only simply posts in the advanced portion of the garden, and placing the bulk of the division in the rear, that

it might not be cut off from the enceinte of the city, with which the Gross-Garten was not immediately connected. He had distributed his posts with infinite skill in such a manner that they should afford each other mutual support, and between the redoubts had placed field artillery, to fill up the spaces which were not sufficiently covered by the fire of the fixed artillery. The Russian troops under Wittgenstein, Miloradowitch, and Barclay de Tolly, which had descended from Peterswalde and fronted our left, would attack between the Elbe and the Gross-Garten by the Pirna and Pilnitz barriers; whilst the Prussians, under General Kleist, would attack the Gross-Garten; and the Austrians, who formed the enemy's left, and consequently fronted our right, would conduct the attack between the Dippoldiswalde and Freiberg barriers. So at least the distribution of the enemy's forces under the semicircle of the heights gave reason to suppose.

Having reconnoitred this line under a heavy fire from the enemy's sharpshooters, Napoleon approved of all Marshal St. Cyr's arrangements, and communicated to him his own plans. The cuirassiers and the old guard were already at hand, but the young guard could not reach Dresden until late in the day, whilst Marshals Marmont and Victor were at a still greater distance. Napoleon determined, therefore, to post a portion of the old guard at the various barriers, retaining the remainder in the rear, at the principal point of the city, and to place Murat, with the whole of Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, on the Friedrichstadt plain, which extends in front of the faubourg of that name, and which formed the extreme right of our line of defence, so as to occupy the space which the fourth division of Marshal St. Cyr was not sufficient of itself to fill. As the portion of the line between this division and the second, in other words, the centre, appeared insufficiently provided with troops, Napoleon sent to this point a portion of the garrison of Dresden, consisting of Westphalian troops; and at the same time ordered General Teste to re-enter the city with his brigade, which had been left at the Elbe for the purpose of supporting Latour-Maubourg's cavalry on the Friedrichstadt plain.

It was thus that Napoleon awaited the onset of the two hundred thousand hostile troops in front of him, and which, when it was past mid-day, had made no other attack than such as consisted in a fire of sharpshooters on our left, and which was answered by Marshal St. Cyr's third division (44th). And the cause of this delay on the part of the enemy was, as might be easily imagined, the result of a fresh difference of opinion amongst the members of the staff. It had been agreed on the previous evening to defer all discussion until the following day, the 26th, when the fourth column would have arrived,

and the plans of the French would be more apparent. But when the morning of the 26th was come it was seen that the state of affairs was entirely altered, Marshal St. Cyr having prudently fallen back upon the works defending the city, and thus taken a position in attempting to drive him from which five or even ten thousand men might be uselessly sacrificed. Under these circumstances, General Jomini, whose spirit was as just as ardent, declared himself of General Moreau's opinion, and as the Emperor Alexander supported their views, it appeared to be decided to fall back upon the Dippoldiswalde heights, for the purpose of taking up a position which should be at once safe and menacing. But the King of Prussia, completely under the sway of the passion which inspired his troops, said in a tone of cold determination, that after having made so ambitious an attempt in Napoleon's rear, to retire without having made a demonstration against Dresden would be to show both fickleness and weakness, and would be a course especially calculated to chill the patriotic ardour of his soldiers. To this General Jomini replied that war was not an affair of sentiment, but of calculation; that had an attack been ventured upon on the previous evening, that of the 25th, it might have had some chance of success, but that now its result must be doubtful, even with the sacrifice of six thousand men. Moreau supported these views, whilst Alexander, according to his usual habit, appeared in a state of doubt, and the King of Prussia manifested a spirit of cold discontent, when an inhabitant of Dresden, taken prisoner at the advanced posts, and required to tell what he knew, declared that Napoleon had entered Dresden, and not alone, and gave such details as precluded the possibility of entertaining any doubt on the matter. As, moreover, the Russian column which had descended by Peterswalde had perceived beyond the Elbe the masses of the French army hastening toward Dresden in such a manner as showed that its defence would be most determined, there was no longer room to doubt that the most advisable course would be to take up, without loss of time, the Dippoldiswalde position. The Austrian generalissimo, however, had on the previous evening issued the order which had been agreed on for a vigorous demonstration against Dresden, and now, either from the difficulty of countermanding with sufficient quickness orders issued to a mass of two hundred thousand men, or from the repugnance of the troops themselves to withdraw without giving the enemy battle, the order to attack was not countermanded in time, and at the moment the bells of the Dresden churches sounded the hour of three, a tremendous cannonade resounded from the lines of the allied troops, to the astonishment of the allied sovereigns, who were only intent upon a movement of retreat. The attack

having now begun, however, it was too late to stop it, and it soon raged on all sides of the city against which it was directed.

Wittgenstein's corps, forming the allies' right, and consequently opposed to our left, advanced between the Elbe and the Gross-Garten, in front of the Pirna faubourg, in spite of the desperate resistance of the men of the 43rd division, and aided by the progress of the Prussians in the Gross-Garten, of which, with great difficulty, their numbers enabled them to take possession. The 43rd division, in fact, consisting of but six or seven thousand men, and being attacked by more than twenty-five thousand of the enemy, was unwilling to persist in maintaining its ground so far as to incur the danger of being cut off from the city itself, and it gradually retreated, therefore, falling back between the Pirna and Dohna barriers, and obstinately disputing Prince Antoine's garden, which was situated in the rear of the Gross-Garten, and joined the 43rd division (St. Cyr's fourth), which was entrusted with the defence of the remainder of the enceinte.

Such was, about five o'clock in the evening, the state of affairs at this point of our line, where the enemy had approached our redoubts with vigour, but had not taken any. In the centre the attack had made greater progress, for the Austrians, perceiving an immense mass of cavalry, which already covered the Friedrichstadt plain on their left, had directed all their efforts against our centre, and attacking each of two redoubts in this portion of our line with fifty pieces of cannon, succeeded in forcing our soldiers to evacuate one of them, situated in the Moczinski garden, and occupied it with their own troops. This was the only one of our redoubts of which they had gained possession, but they were on the point of carrying two others, and the Russians on their right were already at the foot of two more. Although it was now late, and the enemy had but little time left in which to act, the danger of the moment was very serious. In spite of the orders given him to reserve the old guard, Friant, who was in command of the grenadiers of this corps, and was posted in reserve in the Pirna faubourg, had ventured to carry some companies of these brave troops into action, leading them through the Pilnitz and Pirna barriers, and driving back before them, at the bayonet's point, the Russian columns which had approached too closely. In the meantime, at the opposite extremity, that is to say, at the Porte de Freiberg, the fusiliers had acted in the same manner, and driven back the Austrians. But these proceedings, bold as they were, had not fortunately cost any great degree of loss to the old guard, which Napoleon was anxious to reserve, whilst according to the young guard the honours and experiences attending posts of great peril.

But at this moment the columns of this young guard arrived, impatient to measure their strength with that of the enemy, and filling Dresden with cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" They consisted of four excellent divisions of eight or nine thousand each, two under Marshal Mortier, and two under Marshal Ney. Immediately on their arrival, Napoleon hastened to send two of these divisions (those of Decouz and Roguet) to the Pilitz barrier, for the purpose of driving back the Russians, who had continued to gain ground; and the two remaining ones (those of Barrois and Parmentier) to the Pirna barrier, that they might overmaster the Prussian troops, which, after having taken the Gross-Garten, were supporting the Austrians near the redoubt of the Moczinskoi garden. At the same time, he ordered Murat, who had been rejoined by General Teste's infantry, to charge with all his cavalry on the Friedrichstadt plain.

In an instant the whole aspect of affairs underwent a change; for the four divisions of the young guard, issuing from the Ziegel and Pilitz barriers with the force and fury of torrents, in conjunction with the 43rd and 44th divisions, drove back the enemy at every point, and retaking the redoubt situated at the end of the Moczinskoi garden, made prisoners there of six hundred Austrian soldiers. At the same moment General Teste, with the brigade which remained at his disposal, issued from the Freiberg gate and took possession of the village of Klein-Hamburg; whilst Murat, deploying with twelve thousand horse at our extreme right, drove the Austrians from off the Friedrichstadt plain, and compelled them to regain the heights. And now, repulsed in every direction, and recognising in these vigorous measures the strength and skill of Napoleon's own hand, the allies retreated, leaving in our hands three or four thousand of their troops in killed or wounded, and two thousand prisoners; the loss of our own troops, which had fought under cover, being only two thousand altogether.

Delighted with the successes he had obtained during this first day, Napoleon anticipated that he should gain still more brilliant ones on the morrow. He had ascended several times during the day one of the city towers, and gazing from thence upon the semicircle of heights by which Dresden was surrounded, suddenly conceived the idea of a manœuvre not inferior to any he ever executed. On our left the Russians, forming the extreme right of the allied army, were posted between the Elbe and the Gross-Garten. A little less to the left, towards the centre, were the Prussians under General Kleist, who had been driven from the Gross-Garten and had fallen back under the Strehlen heights. Quite at the centre were a portion of the Austrian troops, opposite the Dippoldiswalde and Freil barriers, on the Racknitz and Plauen heights; and

there, between the centre and our right, was a narrow and deep gorge, through which flowed a little river, the Weisseritz, which falls into the Elbe between the old town and the Friedrichstadt faubourg. It was beyond this gorge, called the Valley of the Plauen, on the extreme left of the allies, and on our extreme right, that were posted the greater part of the Austrian troops, who were thus separated from the rest of the allied army by a species of gulf, across which it was impossible to advance to their support. This side of the field of battle was, moreover, more suitable than the other for the manœuvres of cavalry; and Napoleon comprehending at a glance the advantages which were offered by this circumstance, determined to reinforce the King of Naples, to throw him by a detour to the right, in a sudden and unexpected manner, upon the Austrians, who must inevitably, as they could receive no aid, be driven into the Plauen gorge; and after having thus destroyed the allies' left, to send Ney with the whole of the young guard against their right, to drive them back en masse upon the heights from which they had attempted to descend. From this double movement would result a double advantage, for in the first place, it would enable our troops to snatch from the enemy on our right the grand Freiberg route, which was in every way the most convenient for their retreat; and in the second place, it would drive them on the left upon that Peterswalde route on which Vandamme awaited them at the head of forty thousand men, and thus reduce them to the necessity of returning to Bohemia by scarcely formed roads, in traversing which they could not but suffer enormous losses.

Having formed these plans with the most marvellous promptitude, Napoleon gave the necessary orders on the spot, before taking either food or sleep. On the right he posted General Teste, under Marshal Victor, and both under Murat, who would thus have at his disposal twenty thousand infantry and about twelve thousand cavalry; with orders to turn the Austrians by their left, and to pursue them vigorously towards the Vallée de Plauen. He ordered Marshal Marmont, who at this moment arrived, to establish himself at the centre, at the Dippoldiswalde barrier, near the Moczinskoi barrier, with the old guard and the artillery reserves behind him. To Marshal St. Cyr he gave orders to concentrate his three divisions, to range them in close column between the Dippoldiswalde and the Dohna barriers, their right resting on Marshal Marmont's troops, and their left on the Gross-Garten. These two corps, posted near Napoleon, who intended to take up his position at the centre (as he made known to all his lieutenants, that they might go there to him for his orders), were to receive their instructions on the ground, and from his own mouth. Finally, at the extreme left, Ney,



with the whole of the young guard and a portion of the cavalry under Nansouty, was directed to defile behind the Gross-Garten with forty thousand men, to turn round this garden, to expel the Russians from the plain which extends from Striesen to Döbritz, and to drive them back upon the heights, when the allied army should have been sufficiently disordered on the left. Unless circumstances should demand a different course of action, Napoleon's intention was to act on the offensive by his two wings, and to remain immovable at the head of fifty thousand men in the centre of the line, which he had strengthened by more than a hundred additional pieces of artillery.

Napoleon was now, with one hundred and twenty thousand men, about to engage two hundred thousand, which was the number the allied army had attained after the arrival of Klenau's Austrians. Of these two hundred thousand there were one hundred and eighty thousand before Dresden, and twenty thousand before Pirna, under Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg. But to counterbalance this inequality in numbers, Napoleon had the advantage of his combinations, and the forty thousand men under General Vandamme posted at Pirna, where they would be much more useful than they would have been before Dresden.

After he had given the most precise directions for the execution of the measures on which he had determined, Napoleon went to sup with the King of Saxony and his marshals; and then, without revealing his plans, announced his expectation of a decisive battle on the morrow, which would be disastrous to the allies, and surrendered himself throughout the evening to an unusual spirit of mirth, retiring only at a late hour for the purpose of enjoying a little repose between two battles.

In the meantime, in the camp of the allies, where the day did not end thus gaily, it was resolved, after some deliberation, to remain on the hills surrounding Dresden, where they held a most excellent position. But no one thought of the Plauen gorge, beyond which was a portion of the Austrian army, in a position in which it would be impossible to afford it any succour should it be imperilled. Indeed, Prince Schwarzenberg, from fear of a deficiency of strength at the centre, withdrew a portion of the troops which he had beyond the Plauen vale, and thus enfeebled his left wing, which he should have reinforced, and which, it is true, he thought would have been compensated for the loss of the troops of which he deprived it by the arrival of the second half of Klenau's corps.

On the following day, the 27th of August, it rained heavily, and during the intervals between the showers a thick mist enveloped the field of battle, a circumstance which was distressing to the soldiers of the two armies, but favourable to

Napoleon's plans. The early hours of the morning were passed in manœuvres, which, on our side, commenced by General Teste establishing himself, with the eight battalions which were under his command, in front of the village of Löbda, and at the entrance of the Plauen gorge, for the purpose of preventing the Austrian grenadiers under Bianchi from debouching from it, as they had done on the previous evening. Marshal Victor formed his three divisions, of which one was reduced to a brigade, in columns at the foot of the heights, awaiting the execution of Murat's turning movement on the left of the Austrians; and Murat himself, leading Latour-Maubourg's heavy cavalry along the Priesnitz road, hastened to ascend, unperceived by the enemy, to the plateau on which he was to manœuvre. At the centre, Marmont, having the old guard behind him, and a strong force of artillery in front, took up a position at the foot of the Racknitz heights, ready to receive the instructions which Napoleon, whose own position was close at hand, should give him by word of mouth. A little to the left, but still in the centre, St. Cyr, having concentrated his three divisions, which on the previous evening had been distributed around the city, took up a position in advance of the Gross-Garten, where he would be ready to attack the Strehlen heights. Finally, at the extreme left, Ney, with the young guard, and Nansouty's cavalry, defiled in columns behind the Gross-Garten, for the purpose of turning it and advancing to encounter the Russian troops between Gruna and Döbritz.

The positions of the allied troops were the same as those occupied by them on the previous evening, with the exception of certain rectifications, and they awaited almost immovably the attack for which they perceived across the mist the French troops preparing.

As soon as the troops had taken up their respective positions, and it became possible to discern objects across the mist, a cannonade was exchanged between the opposing forces, which soon became violent, the two armies having together not less than twelve hundred pieces of ordnance in position. In the meantime, General Teste, on the right, took possession of Löbda, from which he drove the Austrian sharpshooters, and penetrated as far as the entrance of the Plauen gorge; whilst Marshal Victor, having formed his troops into several columns, commenced climbing the heights in the direction of the villages of Töltschen, Rosthal, and Corbitz, which he had been instructed to seize, and whilst Murat deployed his sixty squadrons on the right of the Chaussée de Freiberg, threatening the Austrians' left.

At the centre, St. Cyr, posted a little to the left of Marmont and the old guard, quitted the walls of the Gross-Garten,

against which he had rested, took Strehlen from the Prussians, and engaged them in a terrific combat between this place and the Leubnitz heights; whilst Ney, having deployed between Gruna and Döbritz, advanced towards Reick, driving before him Wittgenstein's advance guard.

With the exception of the serious engagement which took place between St. Cyr and the Prussians in the direction of Strehlen, little took place up to eleven o'clock in the morning save a violent cannonade and the execution of manœuvres on the two wings. The allies, however, being unable to perceive what was taking place on their left, beyond the valley of Plauen, and perceiving on their right the steady and imposing march of Marshal Ney, were in doubt as to what course they should now pursue; when an idea, conceived by General Jomini, and which consisted in throwing the Prussian troops upon Ney's flank as soon as he should have arrived at Prohlis, whilst Barclay de Tolly should at the same time attack him in front with the Russian reserves, was proposed to and accepted by Alexander, and messengers were sent to the cold and methodical Barclay de Tolly, to persuade him to concur with all his forces in the execution of a manœuvre which was to be, it was thought, decisive.

But whilst this danger, more or less real, threatened Marshal Ney, the left of the allies was menaced by a danger about which there could be no doubt. About half-past eleven Murat and Victor arrived in line beyond the Plauen gorge, and having well concerted their attack, began to execute it with promptitude and vigour. Marshal Victor carried to his left the division Dubreton, the division Dufour, reduced to one brigade, to his right, and held the division Vial in reserve. In the meanwhile, Murat, continuing to manœuvre, endeavoured by advancing as far as Comptitz to outflank the Austrians' left, formed by the division Meszko. When Murat appeared to have gained sufficient ground on the left of the Austrians, Marshal Victor gave the signal, and our troops advanced at quick march upon the three villages Töltschen, Rosthal, and Corbitz. Led by energetic officers, our young soldiers pushed forward with the utmost eagerness, in spite of a murderous fire of cannon and musketry which the Austrians directed against them, and having first taken possession of the enclosed gardens which preceded them, threw themselves upon and took the three villages, and then followed the Austrians who had fallen back upon the rising ground behind them. Suddenly the division Aloys Lichtenstein, perceiving a vacant space between two of our divisions—that of Dubreton, which had advanced somewhat to the left towards Töltschen, and the division Dufour, which was at Corbitz—endeavoured to penetrate it, whereupon it was charged at a

gallop by Bordessoulle's cuirassiers, who instantly broke and sabred two of its squares. The division Dufour then continued its advance along the Freiberg road, whilst on the left Dubreton's two brigades drove the Austrians towards the Plauen gorge, and overpowering them, took more than two thousand prisoners. At the same time, Bordessoulle's cavalry, renewing its assaults upon the division Aloys Lichtenstein, drove it to the summit of the heights between Altfranken and Pesterwitz, and then thrust it down upon Potschappel, in the deepest part of the Plauen gorge, with the loss of many men and cannon. In the meantime, Murat, who had continued to watch the division Meszko, for the purpose of preventing its junction with Aloys Lichtenstein, now pushed it vigorously in the direction of Comptitz, for the purpose of driving it beyond the heights. Having repulsed with loss the charge of three thousand Austrian horse, he attacked Meszko's infantry with his cuirassiers, and drove it before him with continued slaughter for more than a league along the great Freiberg road; until at length being outflanked and surrounded by our squadrons, the six or eight thousand men of which it was composed were compelled to lay down their arms. In two hours Murat had slain or wounded four or five thousand men, made twelve thousand prisoners, and taken rather more than thirty pieces of cannon. The rout of the enemy's left wing was in fact complete; and it may be fairly said that it no longer existed.

Whilst these events were taking place on the allies' left, a strange accident occurred at the centre, where Napoleon was exchanging a vigorous cannonade with the Austrians, and where he himself directed the operations of his batteries in the very thickest of the fire. At the same time, the emperor was at a point exactly opposite, at Racknitz, accompanied by General Moreau, who, seeing the danger of the position, advised him to withdraw somewhat further back. This advice had barely been given, and was on the very point of being executed, when a bullet from the batteries of which Napoleon was personally directing the fire struck the general on his legs, and hurled him and his horse to the ground. A strange stroke of fortune this! which made the instrument of his death a ball from a French cannon, fired, as it were, by Napoleon's own hand.

As the news of this incident spread throughout the allied army, together with information of the disasters suffered on its left wing, and the refusal of Barclay de Tolly to execute the manœuvre against Ney which had been proposed to him, an officer came from Pirna to announce that Vandamme, debouching from Königstein, had taken this post from Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg. And now, alarmed at the misfortunes suffered on their left, exposed to a violent cannonade in the

centre, and threatened with being outflanked on their right by the movement of Marshal Ney, who advanced uninterrupted from Reick upon Prohlis, and fearing that the Peterswalde route would speedily be in the hands of Vandamme, the generals surrounding Alexander and the King of Prussia betook themselves to the consideration of the plan it would now be desirable to pursue, and as Prince Schwarzenberg, frightened at the loss of twenty thousand men on his left, and in want of ammunition by reason of the dilatoriness of his transports, peremptorily refused to continue the battle, it was resolved to retreat towards the Bohemian mountains by which the allied troops had entered Saxony.

As column after column of the enemy was perceived retreating behind the crest of the hills by which Saxony is surrounded, the most vehement delight spread throughout the ranks of our army; and Murat's horse, still following the Freiberg route, every moment took large numbers of prisoners, together with baggage waggons and artillery. At the same time the cannonade at the centre was directed against the enemy with even increased vigour, and St. Cyr and Ney's *ébranlant* on the left climbed the heights in pursuit of the Russians. At six o'clock in the evening we had taken fifty or sixteen thousand prisoners and forty pieces of cannon, whilst ten or eleven thousand of the allied troops lay killed or wounded on the earth. Our own loss during the day amounted to eight or nine thousand men, the greater number of whom had been struck down by the enemy's fire.

Napoleon returned to Dresden at even fall in the midst of the most enthusiastic cries from the populace, who were delighted at having been relieved from the presence of the two hundred thousand troops of the allies, who would not have released them from the French until they had previously made Dresden endure all the horrors which attend the taking of a town by assault. Having been exposed for more than twelve hours to incessant rain, the brim of his hat hung down upon his shoulders, and he was covered with mud; but he did not the less beam with satisfaction. He went to the King of Saxony, who expressed the most lively gratification at the events of the day, and in the midst of the congratulations, sincere or affected, which met him on every side, he continued to repeat one question. At the moment when the bullets which had struck Moreau fell into the midst of the Emperor Alexander's staff, Napoleon had clearly perceived from the splendour of the uniforms that the group must be the staff of one of the sovereigns, and was never tired of asking throughout the day—"And who is it, then, whom we have killed?" A few minutes after his return to Dresden the question was answered in the most remarkable manner. The illustrious man who had been wounded had a dog, which had

remained in the cottage where his master had been carried to receive the first attentions required by his wounds, and this dog was now brought to Napoleon, bearing upon his collar the inscription: "*I belong to General Moreau.*" And thus it was that Napoleon became informed of Moreau's presence and death in the allied army!

The allies having retreated to the summit of the heights which surround Dresden, deliberated upon the line along which it would be advisable to conduct their retreat; some advising the adoption of a position at the debouching of the Bohemian mountains—advice which had also been given by General Moreau before the battle; and others, amongst whom was Prince Schwarzenberg, expressing a wish for an immediate retreat into Bohemia, beyond even the Eger. To remain on the slopes of the mountains in the presence of a victorious enemy so accustomed as Napoleon was to turn a victory to the greatest possible account was not to be thought of, and it only remained to decide by what roads the passage across the mountains should be effected. And with reference to this subject, it had to be considered on the one hand, that the Peterswalde route was much endangered, and might possibly be completely barred by Vandamme, who occupied a position on the Pirna plateau, and on the other, that if the retreat were not conducted by this route, Prince Eugene de Wurtemberg and the Count Ostermann, who had been sent to his aid, would be left unsupported, and almost inextricable confusion would be caused on the secondary roads by which the retreat must then be conducted. It was ultimately decided that the bulk of the Russian troops under Barclay de Tolly should follow Count Ostermann by the Peterswalde route, reopening it by force if necessary; and that the Prussian and a portion of the Austrian troops should take the route passing by Altenberg, Zinnwald, and Töplitz; and finally, that the remainder of the Austrian army should proceed by the Freiberg road for the purpose of gaining the great road running from Leipzig to Prague by Commotau. The result of these arrangements was, that the allied army would return to Bohemia in three columns instead of the four of which it had been previously composed.

On the following morning the troops of the allies proceeded on their march as had been arranged on the previous evening, pursued by the French corps, which, however, were kept at some distance from the enemy by the bad state of the roads. At every step the allied troops left behind them wounded, stragglers, and baggage waggons, which fell into our hands, and continued their march overwhelmed by dismay. The King of Prussia saw in the events of the last few days the continuance of his ordinary bad fortune, and Alexander asked himself

whether the gleam of success on which he had relied had not been a sad illusion, and if he had not hoped too much in flattering himself that he should vanquish Napoleon.

Barclay de Tolly, finding the Peterswalde route much encumbered, and perceiving that he should be soon close pressed, began to fear that he should be unable to strike the Altenberg route sufficiently soon, and suddenly resolved to take a new direction with the bulk of the Russian army, and to turn to the right for the purpose of regaining the same Altenberg route which was being traversed by the Prussians and a portion of the Austrian army, at the risk of producing upon it the most frightful state of confusion. He sent orders to Count Ostermann to fall back upon himself, and to leave Prince Eugène to return alone by the Peterswalde route to Bohemia.

These orders gave rise to a vehement dispute between Prince Eugène de Wurtemberg and Count Ostermann; for the former, who was struggling with General Vandamme for the possession of the Peterswalde route, was reasonably unwilling to remain without support, exposed to the danger of finding Vandamme on his flank, in his rear, or even in front. Besides, he remonstrated, if Vandamme's corps should be permitted freely to enter Bohemia, it would probably post itself at Töplitz, at the very neck of the roads which the retreating columns were following, and cause them no little embarrassment; Count Ostermann, on the other hand, unwilling to compromise the safety of the troops of the guard which had been entrusted to him, refused for a time to yield to the prince's urgent remonstrances; but ultimately, persuaded by the convincing reasons brought forward by the latter in support of his views, he determined at length to follow the Peterswalde route, and even to fight his way along it if necessary, so as to arrive before General Vandamme at the Töplitz débouche.

On the morning of the 28th, accordingly, Prince Eugène and Count Ostermann began to advance along the Plateau de Gieshübel, which is situated below that of Pirna, and separated from it only by the Gotleube rivulet, and having succeeded with some loss in reaching its extremity, issued by the Gieshübel slope, and thus gained the Peterswalde route. But although Vandamme had been prevented by the difficulty attending the conveyance of artillery over roads broken up by the inclemency of the weather from checking the progress of the Russian troops, he pursued them with the utmost vigour, engaged their rear-guard at Gieshübel, where it lost a thousand men, and pursued them closely as far as Hollendorf, where he impatiently awaited orders from Napoleon as to his future movements.

Such were the operations of the enemy during the 28th, and in the meantime, Napoleon, who had risen at a very early hour,

sent orders in writing, to the effect that Marshal Mortier with the young guard, and Marshal St. Cyr with the 14th corps, were to advance to Gieshübel, one of the defiles of the Peterswalde route, for the purpose of effecting a junction with Vandamme; that Marshal Marmont should follow the allies by the Altenberg route; and that Murat, who was accompanied by Victor's corps, should pursue them with the utmost vigour along the great Freiberg route. Having ridden at daybreak with Marshal Marmont, and observed with his own eyes the enemy's retreat, Napoleon had beheld, on arriving at the heights of Dresden, the various columns of the allied troops directing their course towards the wooded mountains of the Erzgebirge. Struck by the transverse movement from left to right executed by the Russian troops of Barclay de Tolly, and perceiving that Marshal Marmont's corps was manifestly insufficient to deal with the masses of hostile troops which this movement would have the effect of throwing upon the Altenberg route, he ordered Marshal St. Cyr to fall back from Dohna to Maxen, for the purpose of approaching Marshal Marmont, and pursuing the enemy in concert with him.

Having given this order by word of mouth, Napoleon proceeded to Pirna, where he arrived about noon, and where, after having partaken of a slight repast, he was seized with a pain in the stomach, to which he was subject after exposure to damp. The attack was not, however, of a nature to prevent him from giving orders, and taking such measures as circumstances rendered necessary. But at this moment he received the despatches which he awaited with impatience from the environs of Berlin and the banks of the Bober; and which informed him that Marshal Oudinot having, in the first place, been prevented entering Berlin by the inundations, had, in the next place, failed to attack the enemy in sufficient force, and had his corps severely handled; whilst Marshal Macdonald, on the Bober, had allowed Blücher to surprise him, and had suffered considerable loss. And thus the horizon of Napoleon's fortunes, after having been so perfectly serene, began to be overcast with shadows. He had always regarded the march upon Berlin as of great importance, both politically and as a matter of military tactics; and now, the reverses suffered by Marshals Macdonald and Oudinot having rendered the execution of this march as well more difficult as of more doubtful issue, it appeared to him that he ought immediately to return to Dresden to direct the measures which the posture of affairs demanded. Convinced as he was that the Russian columns had had time to regain the Peterswalde route, and that all that Vandamme could now do was to pursue them vigorously, he thought that it would be sufficient to leave at Vandamme's disposal all the divisions he had already confided



to him, and making him descend into Bohemia by the Peterswalde route, to move him upon Töplitz, where he would strike the line of retreat of the allied troops. It was very probable that Vandamme, posted at Kulm or at Töplitz, would make more than one good capture, and would be able, by falling back between Tetschen and Aussig, to carry off a great portion of the matériel of the allied troops whenever they should endeavour to recross the Elbe. And in this position Vandamme would render another service by occupying the direct Prague route, to which Napoleon attached the highest importance, in accordance with the idea which he had conceived, since he had received Oudinot's and Macdonald's despatches, of executing an overwhelming march upon Berlin or Prague, for the purpose of falling unexpectedly on the army of the north, or completing the defeat of that of Bohemia. Considering, then, the position of affairs under this new aspect, he left at General Vandamme's disposal not only his two first divisions, Philippon and Dumonceau, with the brigade Quoyot, forming the half of the division Teste, but also the first division of Marshal St. Cyr, which had been lent to him, and a brigade of Victor's corps, to recompense him for the loss of the half of the division Teste. As he added to these troops General Corbineau's cavalry, Vandamme would have under his command what was equivalent to four divisions of infantry and three brigades of cavalry, the whole amounting to at least forty thousand men. Having given Vandamme his orders, Napoleon posted Mortier at Pirna, with four divisions of the young guard, that he might, if necessary, afford support to General Vandamme, from whom he would not be more than seven or eight leagues distant; and then, having sent directions to St. Cyr, Marmont, Victor, and Murat to pursue the allied troops with the utmost vehemence, he set out for Dresden, where he ordered the old guard to join him.

St. Cyr, Marmont, Victor, and Murat continued to pursue the enemy very closely throughout the 28th, taking altogether about five or six thousand prisoners, and a large quantity of matériel. The loss which the allies had suffered on the previous day amounted to about twenty-five thousand men, and as this number was now raised to thirty-two or thirty-three thousand, they began to give such evident signs of discouragement as could not but excite hopes in our army of important results should the enemy be vigorously pursued.

On the following day, the 29th, Vandamme, excited by the orders which he had received on the previous evening, resolved to make the Russians expiate their success in passing before him on the Pirna plateau. Having long suffered under a sense of bitterness at not having been raised to the rank of marshal, whilst it had been bestowed upon some whose

merit was inferior to his own, this general, whose genuine military talents were unfortunately somewhat blemished by manners too redolent of the camp, and an excessive violence of temper, now found circumstances bringing him under the emperor's notice, and flattered himself that he should at length obtain the rewards which he considered that he had long deserved, and felt inspired by a zeal which, serviceable as it might have been at any other time, was too calculated at the present moment to hurry him beyond the bounds of prudence. He boldly advanced, then, on the morning of the 29th, on the Russian rearguard, and attacking between Hollendorf and Peterswalde a Russian column, which attempted to check his progress, utterly routed it, with the loss of two thousand men.

After this exploit Vandamme continued to pursue the Russians with the utmost vigour; and having crossed the mountains, and descended into the plain in their track, arrived about noon at Kulm, from whence he commanded a view of the vast basin in which the enemy's columns, closely followed by our troops, now began to debouch. As soon as he appeared at this point, the troops under Eugène de Wurtemberg and Ostermann's guards took up a position in front of him, for the purpose of covering the débouche de Töplitz, of the importance of which they were fully aware, and where Vandamme had desired to bar the road to the enemy's columns which had taken the routes parallel with those of Peterswalde. Unfortunately, however, the French general had at his immediate disposal only his advanced guard, the remainder of his troops following in a long line through the gorges; and as the Russians were in force, and appeared to be resolved to maintain their ground, he resolved to halt until the remainder of his troops should have come up.

Taking advantage of this interval to learn what had been the proceedings of the allies, we shall find that Alexander had passed the night of the 28th at Altenberg, at the foot of the Erzgebirge mountains, and having crossed the one known as the Geyersberg, had arrived on the other side early on the morning of the 29th, when he immediately perceived the necessity of offering a determined resistance to Vandamme, for the purpose of securing the retreat of the allied army. He had lost the counsellor in whom he had placed so much confidence, General Moreau, for he was now being carried dying on his soldiers' shoulders; but there still remained to him Jomini, whom, in spite of his impetuosity, Moreau had pointed out as very capable of giving good military advice. And now General Jomini, supported by many others who were strongly disposed to decry the Austrians, and, especially

Prince Schwarzenberg, animadverted bitterly on the plan of retreating beyond the Eger, declaring such a movement to be not only unnecessary, but even dangerous; and the Emperor Alexander, who began to understand the art of war somewhat better, appreciated the force of the objection, and was very disposed to modify his plans accordingly. Ever eager at the least gleam of hope to engage the French troops in battle, all the generals by whom Alexander was now surrounded were of opinion that the moment had now come when they should resume the hand-to-hand struggle with the enemy, and that, instead of retreating beyond the Eger, it was necessary to maintain their ground. As Barclay de Tolly and General Diebitch, who had become chief of the staff, coincided with their opinion, orders were given to Prince Eugène de Wurtemberg and d'Ostermann to remain firm in front of Kulm; and at the same time M. de Metternich, who was at Duchs, the château of the celebrated Wallenstein, where the allied sovereigns were now assembled, was persuaded to give orders that all the Austrian troops should converge on the left, for the purpose of forming in line with the Russian troops, which had descended from Peterswalde.

Some hours must necessarily elapse, however, before any considerable amount of forces could be brought into line in accordance with these orders; and Vandamme finding the fugitive troops halting and becoming rapidly more numerous, resolved to dislodge them at once from the position in which they appeared inclined to establish themselves, for the purpose of protecting against us the Geyersberg débouches. He had at this moment at his immediate disposal only the brigade de Reuss, but with that alone he now drove the Russians from Kulm, where they had attempted to maintain their ground, and from the village of Straden, upon which they retreated. Beyond the village of Straden, however, there was a second position situated behind a ravine, and apparently of considerable strength. Resting on the side towards our right on the mountains, it was supported in the centre by the village of Priesten, which stood on the Töplitz route, and was flanked on its left by wide grass lands intersected by canals, and the village of Karbitz. Vandamme was anxious by an immediate attack on the village of Priesten to prevent the Russians from establishing themselves there, but he now for the first time encountered an obstinate resistance, and was repulsed by a charge of the Ismailow guards. As he had neither his heavy artillery nor masses of infantry at hand, he was compelled to await the arrival of the division Mouton-Duvernety and it would evidently have been better to have deferred further operations until the

presence of his whole corps had enabled him to engage the enemy with sufficient forces. As, however, a considerable time must necessarily elapse before his other divisions could be at hand, his anxiety to cut off the enemy's retreat led him to attack the enemy with the nine battalions which alone were present at this moment of the fourteen of which General Mouton-Duvernety's division was properly composed. Carrying these nine divisions to the right towards the wood, he renewed the combat, and drove the Russians upon Priesten; but being suddenly assailed by forty squadrons of the Russian guard, our troops again found themselves in a position in which, instead of advancing, they could only with some difficulty keep the ground they had already gained. At two o'clock in the afternoon appeared the first brigade of Vandamme's first division (Philippon), and the second brigade followed under General Fezensac. But although the troops of these brigades entered into action immediately with the utmost vigour, Vandamme perceived too late that this desultory mode of attack could have no effectual results, and determined to establish himself on the Kulm height, which, situated at the débouché of the Peterswalde causeway, commanded the plain. After one vain attempt to drive us from this position, the Russians fell back in their turn, and resumed their position at Priesten.

General Vandamme's intention was to remain at Kulm until Mortier, who had remained in his rear at Pirna, should come to his aid; and that St. Cyr and Marmont, who were on his right on the other side of the mountains, crossed them in the track of the allies. As these movements might be easily executed in twelve or fifteen hours, he hoped, by making active use of all the forces at his command, to be able to lay before the emperor on the following day, the 30th, results which should be not wholly contemptible. He wrote that same evening to Napoleon, informing him of his position, requesting reinforcements, and announcing that he should remain immovable at Kulm until they arrived.

As letters sent from Kulm on the evening of the 29th could not reach Dresden until the morning of the 30th, the orders issued in accordance with demands made in such letters could not be executed in time to afford Vandamme the aid he required sufficiently early on the 30th. But the fact was, that Napoleon, supposing from the information he had already received that the allies were in a state of complete rout, and that whilst the unslacking vigour with which they would be pursued by St. Cyr, Marmont, and Murat, would drive them across the mountains in disorder, Vandamme, posted on the other side, would be enabled to take large bodies of them prisoners, and perhaps close against them entirely the Altenberg débouché. He was,

moreover, at this moment entirely absorbed by a vast combination which would enable him, he hoped, to advance upon the Berlin route five marches from Dresden, to crush the army of the north, to humble by one and the same blow Prussia and Bernadotte, to revictual the fortresses on the Oder, to send encouragements to those on the Vistula, and thus to give a new aspect to the war, the theatre of which would be transferred for a time to the north of Germany. And thus Berlin, and the fortresses on the Oder and the Vistula, which had already caused him to give too wide a scope to the circle of his operations, once more engrossed his attention, and turned it from the direction in which, for some hours at least, it should have been concentrated. Entirely carried away by the singularly great but singularly ill-timed idea by which his mind was now occupied, he sent orders in the course of the morning of the 30th to Marshal Mortier, then at Pirna, to send to Dresden two of the divisions of the young guard, and with the two others to proceed to the aid of Vandamme; to Murat, to place at the disposal of him, Napoleon, half the heavy cavalry, and with the remainder to continue the pursuit of the enemy along the Freiberg road; to Marshal Marmont, to push the enemy with the utmost vigour upon the Altenberg and Zinnwald débouche; and to Marshal St. Cyr, to aid Marmont in this operation, or, which would be better, to endeavour to gain the Peterswalde causeway by a side road, so as to effect a junction with Vandamme.

In the meantime, the allies were far from being occupied with such vast plans as these, being only anxious to escape from the perils to which they had exposed themselves by imprudently descending upon the rear of Dresden. Desirous before all things to hold Vandamme in check, they carried to the left all the Prussian and Austrian troops which arrived at Töplitz by the Altenberg road, and posted them behind Priesten and Karbitz, hoping by that means to prevent the French general from debouching from Kulm, and so to procure time for the safe passage of their columns across the mountains. There was great cause for anxiety, however, in respect of the Prussian corps under Kleist, which was to have followed the Austrian corps in the first movement of retreat, and was to have passed with it by Dippoldiswalde, but which had been prevented from executing this movement by the transversal movement executed by Barclay de Tolly, who had abruptly fallen back from the Peterswalde causeway upon the Altenberg road, for the purpose of avoiding Vandamme. Delayed in its march, and forced to wait until the road was free, this corps was still on the evening of the 29th on the other side of the Geyersberg, and was considered to be in a position of extreme peril. The

King of Prussia, therefore, after having conferred on the matter with the Emperor Alexander, sent Colonel Schoeler, one of his aides-de-camp, to General Kleist, to inform him of the presence of Vandamme at Kulm, to give him liberty to choose by which road he would endeavour to release himself from his perilous position, and to promise him that the enemy would be energetically opposed before Kulm on the following day, for the purpose of affording him leisure to traverse the mountain and debouch in the basin of the Eger.

On the morning of the 30th of August the two armies found themselves occupying the same positions as on the previous evening: the allies facing Vandamme, with their left, composed of Russian troops, close to the mountains; their centre, also composed of Russian troops, in advance of Priesten, and *vis-à-vis* with Kulm; and their right, consisting of Austrians and the cavalry of the allied army, in the Karbitz grass lands.

Anxious as they were to assume the offensive for the purpose of favouring General Kleist's passage across the mountains, and supposing, as they did, that Vandamme had only thirty thousand troops at his disposal, they resolved to attack him without further delay.

The French general, on the other hand, having perceived from daybreak the disproportion between the enemy's forces and his own, and expecting every instant the appearance of General Mortier in his rear, and that of Marshal St. Cyr on his right, was desirous of remaining on the defensive until the arrival of his reinforcements. At eight o'clock the enemy's sharpshooters opened their fire, and ours replied; but no proceeding on either side foreboded the imminence of a serious engagement, until suddenly, on our left, the Russian horse, under General Knorring, were perceived crossing an eminence which commanded the grass lands, and rushing upon a battery of field guns which was somewhat in advance of our line of cavalry. Three pieces were taken, and a battalion of the 13th léger which attempted to defend them suffered severe loss. The light cavalry brigade of General Heinrodt, led by the gallant Corbineau, then charged the Russian cuirassiers and repulsed them; but Colleredo's Austrian infantry, moving up to the support of the latter, Heinrodt's chasseurs were compelled to fall back, General Corbineau, who was wounded in the head, having to quit the field.

Vandamme now advanced the brigade Quoyot from the centre towards the left, where it had scarcely arrived when it was attacked by the whole of General Knorring's cavalry, and supported during more than an hour, formed into squares, the enemy's attempts to break them. At length, upon the enemy's cavalry attempting to turn our squares and approach Kulm,

it was charged in its turn by the cavalry brigade of General Gobrecht, and thrown back upon the Austrian army. The enemy's object evidently was to throw us back upon the Peterswalde route by outflanking us, but his efforts had as yet been unsuccessful; and as we still remained in possession of the plain on the left, and were firmly posted in the centre and on the right, where the enemy appeared to be afraid of attacking us, we had apparently nothing to fear.

Suddenly, however, about ten o'clock in the morning heavy firing was heard in our rear, and dense columns made their appearance in that direction, believed by Vandamme to be Mortier's troops arriving from Pirna. Terrible was his surprise, however, when on running up he perceived the Prussian uniform, and found that they were the troops of General Kleist, which had descended by the Peterswalde causeway. Let us turn our attention to the accidental but fortunate and despairing movement which had released them from a position of frightful peril, and thus thrown them on our rear. At Kulm it had been apparent to General Kleist, that as he was between the Peterswalde route on the left, which was occupied by Vandamme, and the Altenberg route on the right, which had been encumbered all the day by the Russians and Austrians, and which was at that moment intercepted by Marmont's corps, it only remained to him to follow the footpaths right before him, leading across the mountain, with the risk of meeting with Vandamme on his road. Moreover, as St. Cyr's corps was close on his rear, if he were now to hesitate for even a moment, his force might very probably be attacked and destroyed. In the presence of this triple danger, then, the Prussians, possessed by a transport of enthusiasm, climbed the mountain paths before them, prepared, should they lead them into the midst of the forces of Vandamme, to cut their way through them or perish in the attempt. And when they found themselves, thirty thousand strong, on Vandamme's rear, and discovered that the French general was assailed in front by a hundred thousand of the allied troops, they hastened to attack him, with the confident hope of obtaining some important result.

Vandamme immediately perceived that the only course now open to him was to reascend the Peterswalde causeway and to pass through the midst of the Prussian columns, abandoning his artillery for the purpose of saving his army. He lost no time in giving the orders necessary to the carrying out this resolution; and the brigades Quoyot and Reuss forthwith quitted the plain on the left for the purpose of regaining the Peterswalde causeway, whilst Philippon and Mouton-Duvernay slowly fell back. At this sight the sixty Russian battalions which were opposite our right and centre sent forth shouts of delight,

and followed us. Mouton-Duvernet and Philippon held them in check, and they also suffered severely from the fire of our cannon posted on the heights of Kulm. But on the left in the plain, where there now remained only the brigade Dunesme, this brigade was beset by a formidable mass of enemies. In the rear, the brigades Quoyot and Reuss, attempting to regain the Peterswalde route in close column, made a vigorous charge upon the Russians; at the same moment a brigade of cavalry, that of Montmarie, followed by many *soldats du train*, threw itself upon the Prussian artillery and took it. General de Fezensac, summoned to this point by Vandamme, contributed with the remnant of his brigade to the common effort. And this effort, as Kleist's first line had been broken through, for a moment appeared likely to be successful, if Mouton-Duvernet and Philippon, falling back in time and in good order, should aid in forcing the Prussians' second line. But a strange accident now took place, and overthrew all the calculations of the unfortunate Vandamme; for our cavalry being charged by the enemy on the left of the route, and thrown back upon the right, precipitated itself in that direction, followed by a multitude of artillerymen who were separated from their pieces; and this body of fugitives, rushing upon the troops of Mouton-Duvernet and Philippon, threw them into a state of confusion, which ended in a general movement of retreat towards the woods. Dunesme's brigade alone remained on the plain, assailed in every direction, and defending itself with the utmost heroism, but ultimately broken and overwhelmed, a portion of its troops being killed or taken prisoners, and the remainder flying for refuge to the woods. Vandamme and Haxo, wounded and lingering last of all in the midst of peril, were made prisoners.

Such was the unfortunate affair of Kulm, which cost us five or six thousand men killed or wounded, seven thousand prisoners, forty-eight pieces of cannon, and two generals, and which, whilst costing the allies some six thousand men, relieved them from their position of defeat, re-inspired them with the hope of victory, and effaced from their minds the remembrance of the disasters they had suffered on the 26th and 27th of August.

Where can we look for the cause of this singular catastrophe? Shall we attribute it to Vandamme, saying that he ventured too much? or to Mortier and St. Cyr, complaining that they failed to afford him timely succour? or to Napoleon, on the ground that he trusted too much to the favourable progress of affairs? or shall we rather regard it as the legitimate consequence of the military skill displayed by the generals of the allied armies? The facts above narrated almost of themselves sufficiently answer these questions, and account for one of the



greatest reverses of fortune of which the pages of history retain any record.

Vandamme, whose many faults were counterbalanced by many fine qualities, is certainly not blamable for the unfortunate results of these days; for if, after having wisely established himself at Kulm, it was General Kleist instead of Marshal Mortier who appeared in his rear, this was an extraordinary accident, to hold him responsible for which would be a crying injustice. During the catastrophe which followed, Vandamme preserved all his presence of mind, and took the only resolution which offered a chance of escape, namely, that of retracing his steps and passing through the midst of the Prussian troops. He is not fairly open to reproach, and the supposition that he lost himself in a too eager pursuit of that marshal's baton which, far more than others, he deserved for military services already performed, is a calumny upon a man whose misfortunes render him an object for pity rather than blame.

If it be admitted, however, that Vandamme is not to be blamed, having been unfortunate only in the fact that a Prussian corps appeared in his rear instead of the French one which he expected, what are we to say of the French generals who might have supported him, and more particularly of Marshals Mortier and St. Cyr, the only ones posted within reach of Kulm? Marshal Mortier, established at Pirna, liable to be despatched thence either to Dresden on the one hand, or to Töplitz on the other, might certainly, had he acted with more self-reliance and vigilance, have hastened up to Vandamme's aid; but it was, at the same time, perfectly natural that, in the strict fulfilment of the orders he had received, he should await in complete immovability the expression of Napoleon's will; and with respect to the precise order given to him to aid Vandamme with two divisions, it is sufficient to state that this order did not reach him until the catastrophe had already taken place.

It would be well if we could say as much with respect to Marshal St. Cyr; but the fact is, that directed as he was to keep constantly on the track of Kleist's corps, he should never have lost sight of him for an instant, and had he fulfilled this positive duty the necessary result would have been, that when Kleist's corps fell upon Vandamme, it would itself have been attacked by a French corps in the rear, and would probably have been itself broken and routed instead of helping to break and rout the army of Vandamme. But unfortunately Marshal St. Cyr, never zealous for the success of any operations but those with the execution of which he was himself directly charged, and ever inclined rather to seek difficulties than to seek to overcome them, employed the 28th in moving to Maxen,

and on the following day, the 29th, only advanced to Reinhardt's Grimme, thus making a movement of no more than a league and a half on the very day when it was important that the enemy should be pursued with the utmost vigour, and allowed Kleist to disappear from before him and fall upon Vandamme's rear, whilst he employed himself in inquiring of the staff whether he should not follow Marmont on the Altenberg route. On the following day, the 30th, when he received the order directing him to endeavour to effect a junction with Vandamme by a lateral route, he at length aroused himself, and by the road which had led Kleist upon Vandamme's rear, and which should have conducted himself upon Kleist's rear, arrived just in time to hear the cannon which announced our disaster.

As for Marshal Marmont, he pushed the enemy as vigorously as he could, and engaged in several skirmishes which resulted to his advantage, but he was too far from Vandamme to be able to move up to his support. Posted decidedly on the right, he could not attempt to cross the mountains in advance of St. Cyr without exposing himself to falling alone amidst a crowd of enemies; and the catastrophe is not therefore to be attributed to any error of his. With respect to Murat, it is sufficient to say that it was impossible that he should have had any share in the deplorable event which took place at Kulm, since he and his squadrons were traversing at the time the great Freiberg route.

Of the persons who may be considered the responsible actors in this catastrophe it remains, finally, to speak of Napoleon himself, who, by sedulously following his lieutenants, might have made them converge towards a common point, and by his presence would certainly have obtained what he hoped and expected. But he was turned aside on the 28th from this duty by the news which reached him from the neighbourhood of Löwenberg and Berlin, and also, it must be added, by the confidence he felt that the orders he had given were of themselves sufficient to secure the results he desired. Ever recurring to past experiences, Napoleon believed that he had done sufficient to render him certain of obtaining the most splendid triumphs. But unfortunately times were changed, and to have accomplished the destruction of the grand army of Bohemia would have required at least Napoleon's incessant superintendence of the execution of his designs. But now, distracted as he was by the passionate desire of obtaining all results at once, Berlin and Dantzic were as much means of leading him into error as Moscow had been during the previous year. Indeed, that he might strike a serious blow at Prussia and Germany, at Berlin, and be able to boast that his power extended from the Gulf of Tarentum to the Vistula, he had entertained the idea from the very commencement of this

campaign of sending one of his corps to the Prussian capital, and keeping a garrison at Dantzic; and for the sake of these objects he had, as we have seen, allowed an error to creep into the finely conceived plan he had formed for the conduct of the campaign, giving an excessive extent to the circle of operations, the central point of which was to be at Dresden, placing Macdonald at Löwenberg instead of at Bautzen, and sending Oudinot against Berlin instead of establishing him at Wittenberg. And as the same cause continued to produce the same effects, he was anxious, on learning the misfortune which had happened to Macdonald, to succour him as soon as possible; and being also anxious to lead in person Oudinot's army to Berlin, he turned from Pirna and Kulm, where he ought to have been with his guard, and neglected to achieve victories, the consequences of which would have been of the utmost advantage to him, for the purpose of running after others, and thus exposed himself to the danger of losing everything from an over anxiety to obtain everything at once.

But for this catastrophe at Kulm alone must he be blamed, for in the details of the several manœuvres he had committed no fault. And at the same time it must be observed that the actual results were but little due to the merits of his enemies; a sentiment of despair rather than calculation having led them to carry into execution a combination which had the most unexpected and important consequences, and which was certainly due, not to the skill of the Emperor Alexander, to whom its merit has been attributed, but to the determination of the Prussian troops either to cut their way out of their perilous position or perish in the attempt. We must look, then, not so much to the military skill of the allies, although they were far from being deficient in this, as to the passionate spirit of patriotism which inspired them, and which rendered them comparatively indifferent to defeat, for the cause of their seizing with such promptitude the opportunity offered them at Kulm. Another important moral lesson to be drawn from these great events is, that care should ever be taken not to drive men to despair, since to do this is to endow them with a supernatural strength which may enable them to overthrow the best calculations, and to frustrate the plans of the most consummate skill.

The allies who, when they abandoned the battlefield of Dresden, regarded themselves as completely vanquished, and sadly questioned whether, in attempting to vanquish Napoleon, they had not undertaken an enterprise against destiny itself, suddenly, at the spectacle of the defeat and capture of Vandamme, regarded themselves as being once more in an excellent position, and believed that the balance of fortune between themselves and Napoleon was at least in equilibrium. It is

true that the two days' fighting at Dresden, and the pursuit during the 28th and 29th, had cost them in killed, wounded, or prisoners, some forty thousand men, whilst the defeat of Vandamme had at the most cost us no more than twelve thousand. But nevertheless the result was that a feeling of confidence had re-entered their hearts, and they resolved to close with Napoleon at every opportunity, and leave him not a moment in repose. For the allies, not to be vanquished was almost to be victorious; whilst for Napoleon, on the contrary, to have failed to annihilate his adversaries was to have done nothing. On such extreme and almost impossible conditions had he based his hopes of safety.

Let us conclude this sad story by mentioning that the only man who had for a moment been opposed to Napoleon, Moreau, died very near him at Tann. Both his legs had been cut off, and he had borne the operation with that tranquil courage which was his distinguishing characteristic. But his sufferings were terrible, and he had had to undergo a journey of twenty leagues, carried on the shoulders of men, the foes of his country, in a state of extreme bodily anguish. On the other side of the mountains, all the allied sovereigns, the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Austria, and the Emperor Alexander, had hastened to his side, and overwhelmed him with marks of esteem and regret. The most exalted personages, M. de Metternich, the Prince of Schwarzenberg, and the generals of the coalition paid him visits; and the Emperor Alexander, who had conceived for him a genuine friendship, even clasped him in his arms. But Moreau, whose impetuous spirit had ever been an honest one, was rather embarrassed by than proud of these demonstrations, and asking himself what had been the real nature of the course he had pursued, repeated incessantly, "And yet I am not to blame! I only desired the good of my country. . . I wished to free her from a humiliating yoke." Another exclamation which frequently escaped his lips was, "That Bonaparte is always fortunate!" He had uttered these words at the moment when the bullet struck him, and he repeated them many times before he expired. Bonaparte fortunate? He had been, and he might appear to be so to the eyes of a dying rival, but Providence was soon to pronounce its will respecting him, and to inflict upon him a fate sadder, perhaps, than that of Moreau, if indeed any fate can be sadder than that which makes a man die in the ranks of the enemies of his country.

## BOOK L.

### LEIPSIC AND HAINAU.

THE serious and unexpected events which, suddenly engrossing Napoleon's attention, withdrew him from Kulm, had taken place on the Katzbach in Silesia, and at Gross-Beeren in Brandenburg. Marshal Macdonald, whom Napoleon had left in pursuit of Blücher, had met with a species of disaster, and Marshal Oudinot, whom Napoleon thought to be on the point of entering Berlin, had had to fall back, in consequence of an unfortunate engagement with the enemy, under the cannon of Wittenberg. And the manner in which these events had been brought about we must now examine, if we would form an accurate idea of the situation of affairs, and be able to comprehend the plans which had absorbed Napoleon's attention during the 28th, 29th, and 30th of August, and had prevented him from hastening up with all his reserves to the aid of the unfortunate Vandamme.

After he had thrown back the army of Silesia from the Bober upon the Katzbach, Napoleon had left Marshal Macdonald to march in pursuit of it at the head of a force of eighty thousand men, consisting of the 3rd, 5th, and 11th corps, and ten or eleven thousand Poles under Prince Poniatowski, posted on the Bohemian frontier in the rear and on the right of Marshal Macdonald, for the purpose of guarding the Zittau débouché. The instructions he had given to Macdonald were to the effect that he was to drive Blücher back beyond Jauer, then to establish himself strongly upon the Bober, between Löwenberg and Buntzlau, in such a manner as to keep the army of Silesia at a distance from Dresden, and to prevent the army of Bohemia from throwing detachments in the direction of Berlin.

An incident, however, which at first sight appeared to be of but little importance, had the effect of producing a most disastrous change in this apparently advantageous state of affairs. Napoleon, at the moment of his departure, had ordered Marshal Ney to follow him to Dresden; and as this order did not express with sufficient explicitness that it referred to the marshal only, and not to his troops, the 3rd corps itself had been set in motion on the Dresden route, and the result had been that the left wing of the French army had appeared to be in retreat. Blücher,

whose character and position rendered him anxious to resume the offensive, had concluded from the retrograde movement of a portion of our line that Napoleon was no longer present, and that the moment was an opportune one in which to return once more to the attack of the French army. At the same time Marshal Macdonald, equally anxious to restore to his troops the attitude they had appeared to lose, hastened without due thought to carry them forward, and thus exposed them to a violent and immediate check.

The 3rd corps (General Souham's), having first made a march backwards, and then a march forwards, in order to return to Liegnitz, had resumed on the 25th of August its original position. The 11th corps (General Gerard's), forming the centre, had not quitted Goldberg, and the 5th (General Lauriston's), forming the right, had also remained in its position. Having all his troops in line then, Marshal Macdonald resolved to advance on the following day (the 26th) upon Jauer, the position which Ney had in obedience to his instructions to occupy. Although Napoleon did not wish to establish his army of Silesia at any point more distant than the Bober, he yet desired that it should have its advanced posts on the Katzbach, from Jauer to Liegnitz, in order that it might the more readily obtain provisions, and the more surely intercept any detachment that might be sent from Bohemia to Berlin.

Although at Goldberg, Marshal Macdonald was on one of the arms of the Katzbach, and consequently very much beyond the Bober, there was a point of this river on his right which still remained in the possession of the enemy, being that of Hirschberg, in the mountains. He detached, therefore, a division of the 11th corps (General Ledru's), and ordered it to ascend the river on our side, that is, by the left bank, whilst the division Puthod, of Lauriston's corps, should ascend it by the right bank, and thus surprise Hirschberg by both banks.

Macdonald resolved to march himself upon Jauer, with the corps of Lauriston and Gerard; and as he would have to cross on his way to Jauer no watercourse of any considerable size, but only a few ravines more or less deep, on which the enemy would probably be found posted in strength, he flattered himself that he should be able to drive them from their position either by the direct attack of the troops under Gerard and Lauriston upon Jauer itself, or by a flank movement upon Liegnitz, to be executed by those under Generals Souham and Sebastiani.

He ordered, in fact, General Souham to set out from Liegnitz with the 3rd corps, and to take the route from this town to Jauer, which would lead him across the Janowitz plateau to the very flank of the enemy's position there; and he hoped that the appearance of twenty-five thousand French troops in

this direction would take from the enemy any idea of resisting the attack in front which was to be executed by Generals Lauriston and Gerard. But unfortunately there was a considerable distance between the road which General Souham was to follow on the Janowitz plateau, and the route which Generals Gerard and Lauriston would have to traverse for the purpose of marching directly upon Jauer. General Gerard, the least distant of the two, would ascend the deep ravine of the Wutten-Neiss, a small and rapid stream falling from Jauer into the Katzbach, after turning the Janowitz plateau. For the purpose of establishing some connection between the two principal masses of his troops, Marshal Macdonald assigned to General Sebastiani an intermediate route, that from Buntzlau to Jauer, which, following at first the Wutten-Neiss ravine, and then crossing that river, terminated in the Janowitz plateau.

On the 26th it was found that a storm of rain, which had lasted during the whole night, had swollen all the rivers and rendered the roads almost impassable. In his eagerness, however, to resume offensive operations against the enemy, Marshal Macdonald refused to take into account the inclemency of the weather, and demanded that his orders should be immediately carried into effect; and accordingly, whilst the divisions Puthod and Ledru ascended the two banks of the Bober on their way to Hirschberg, Lauriston's and Gerard's corps marched upon Jauer; our active skirmishers succeeding, in spite of the difficulties of the nature of the ground and the weather, in dislodging those of the enemy, and compelling them at every point to fall back. On the left, however, matters did not proceed quite so satisfactorily.

General Sebastiani, who had set out somewhat tardily, had not reached the entrance of the Wutten-Neiss ravine when General Gerard had already penetrated it, and when Lauriston, who was marching parallel to him, was very much in advance. General Souham, in the meantime, having found the Katzbach overflowed at Liegnitz, had endeavoured to find a passage above it, and had thus entered upon the same route as that pursued by General Sebastiani. The consequence was, that there were twenty-three or twenty-four thousand infantry, and five or six thousand cavalry, and more than a hundred pieces of cannon engulphed in the Wutten-Neiss ravine at the very moment that the Prussian cavalry, reconnoitring, had descended the Janowitz plateau, and not perceiving our troops, had advanced into the ravine a considerable distance. General Gerard, perceiving from the opposite bank of the Wutten-Neiss the Prussian squadrons, opened fire on their rear; the effect of which was to lay many of them low, but at the same time to

warn them of the danger of their position, and to cause them to retrace their steps with the utmost speed.

This incident suggested to Marshal Macdonald the idea of throwing some battalions of the division Charpentier, one of General Gerard's two, upon the Janowitz plateau, to take possession of it, and thus aid Generals Sebastiani and Souham to deploy there. General Charpentier, accordingly, with one of his brigades and a field battery, forthwith crossed the Wutten-Neiss at Nieder-Krayn, and ascending to the Janowitz plateau, deployed upon it in spite of the Prussian advanced posts. He was immediately joined on his left by General Sebastiani's cavalry; and General Souham proceeded to follow him as fast as the weather, the nature of the ground, and the accumulation of troops in the narrow defile through which he had to pass would permit.

At this moment Blucher came up to this same point with the greater number of his troops; for, relying upon the strength of the Jauer position, he had left there only Langeron's corps, and had moved up both York's and Sacken's to the Janowitz plateau for the purpose of meeting the flank movement by which he was threatened. On beholding our troops climbing up the brink of the ravine for the purpose of establishing themselves on the plateau, he sent forward a strong field battery, and when this had played on the brigade of General Charpentier for some time, hurled upon it a mass of ten thousand cavalry, the assaults of which our infantry bravely checked, not with the fire of their muskets, which the rain had rendered useless, but with the points of their bayonets. General Sebastiani charged this body of cavalry in its turn, and succeeded for a moment in driving it back, but he was ultimately compelled to give way, being unable to resist for any time forces treble his own, and was forced to make a retrograde movement, thereby leaving exposed the left of the brigade Charpentier, which Blucher then attacked with twenty thousand infantry, and in spite of its heroic resistance, drove back into the Wutten-Neiss ravine, where it became mingled *pêle-mêle* with Sebastiani's cavalry, which had also fallen back, and with the head of Souham's corps, which had then arrived. The consequence being that in a state of the greatest confusion and with the loss of many cannon, the horses of which were destroyed by the enemy's fire, our troops had to retreat as far as the village of Kroitsch, where the Wutten-Neiss joins the Katzbach, and beyond which Blucher dared not pursue us.

The result of this check at a single point, which cost us at the most but a thousand men, had the effect of converting into a species of general rout an operation which along all the other portions of our line had been successful. In fact, Generals



Gerard and Lauriston, attacking with great energy the positions which Langeron had successively occupied and abandoned, had already arrived within sight of Jauer in spite of the inclemency of the weather, and were about to take possession of it, when they were stopped by the news of what had taken place on their left, and being compelled in common prudence to retrace their steps, they went back as far as Goldberg, which they reached about midnight, in a very deplorable state, having on their way fallen in with the débris of the troops which had been defeated on the Janowitz plateau, and having had to traverse a road choked up with baggage waggons and crowds of wounded. They had to bivouac in the midst of torrents of rain as well as they could, some in Goldberg and some outside of it, for the most part without either provisions or shelter, and altogether in a condition as deplorable as any could well be.

On the following morning the skies still continued to pour forth a torrent of rain; but fortunately the Katzbach, which our troops had passed on the previous evening, had become so swollen as to serve as a protection against the impetuous pursuit of Blucher, whose infantry could not cross it. Nevertheless, our retreating troops were pursued by a cloud of Russian and Prussian cavalry, whose repeated attacks, although bravely held in check by our bayonets, rendered it necessary to leave on the road a great portion of our artillery, and many of our troops who had scattered themselves amongst the villages in search of food. General Souham's corps, being covered by General Sebastiani's cavalry, was able to retreat in safety across the plain and reach Buntzlau; but the corps of Generals Gerard and Lauriston, more closely pursued, and having no heavy cavalry with which to cover their retreat, found shelter in the woods which separate the Katzbach from the Bober, where they passed the night much as they had passed the preceding one. On the 28th, they were once more opposite Löwenberg, and were desirous of crossing the Bober there, but in vain, for although the bridge still stood, the troops would have had to pass across an inundated tract of country three-quarters of a league in extent to reach even the river-side, and they had therefore to redescend its right bank for the purpose of crossing it at Buntzlau, where Souham and Sebastiani had already arrived.

When he had re-entered Buntzlau, Marshal Macdonald was far from considering the cruel fatality which appeared to pursue him as at an end, for he had still to tremble for the safety of the division of Puthod, which was evidently in a most dangerous position. Should it not have taken advantage of the Hirschberg bridge to cross to the other side of the Bober? The fact was, that this division, which had ascended one bank of

the Bober whilst the division Ledru ascended the other, had neglected to make use of the Hirschberg bridge whilst it was yet time, and had found itself separated from its companions in arms by an immense tract of water. On the 29th, it descended by the right bank to a point opposite Löwenberg, near Zopten, and there, when reduced by fatigue, hunger, and the cold of the nights from six thousand men to three thousand, it was attacked by Blücher's troops, and after a valiant defence, completely broken up.

On the 30th, Macdonald's troops were once more collected on the left bank of the Bober, but reduced from seventy thousand men to fifty thousand, and after having left behind them in the marshes a hundred pieces of cannon. Of the twenty thousand troops wanting, not more than three thousand had fallen before the enemy's fire, seven or eight thousand of the remainder having been taken prisoners, and nine or ten thousand having deserted from their ranks; a too sudden experience of the sufferings of war having excited anew in the breasts of these latter the sentiments of hatred they had felt six months before, on quitting their cottage homes, for the man who sacrificed them whilst only on the threshold of manhood to his inordinate ambition.

In the meantime, our arms had suffered a reverse on the Berlin route, which, although of a less startling character than that above described, was succeeded by equally disastrous consequences.

We have seen how important Napoleon considered it that one of his corps should march upon Berlin, for the purpose of driving the army of the north far from the theatre of the war, humiliating Bernadotte, startling the minds of the Germans by entering the chief of their capitals, inflicting a severe wound on the Tugend-Bund, dissolving the scattered elements of which he believed Bernadotte's army to be composed, and finally, to succour our garrisons on the Oder and the Vistula. To attain these various ends he had placed at Marshal Oudinot's disposal, besides the 12th corps, which the marshal commanded in person, the 7th, which was under the immediate command of General Reynier, and the 4th, which was confided to General Bertrand. The 12th, comprising two good French divisions and a Bavarian one, and numbering some eighteen thousand men; the 7th, formed of the French division Durutte and two Saxon divisions, and numbering twenty thousand men; the 4th, consisting of one French division (Morand's) and two foreign ones (the Italian division Fontanelli, and the Wurtembergian division Franquemont), and consisting altogether of twenty thousand men; and lastly, a cavalry reserve of six thousand men under the Duke of Padua. This army, which consisted of only sixty-four thousand men instead of the seventy thousand

which Napoleon had hoped it would have comprised, and contained besides many foreign troops, which were not only very indifferent soldiers, but also, in many instances, very ill-disposed towards us, was far from being as well commanded as could have been wished; for Marshal Oudinot, who was as brave and resolute on the field of battle as any one could be, was endowed with a noble modesty of nature which rendered him distrustful of himself, and unwilling to enforce the adoption of his views by his lieutenants, Generals Reynier and Bertrand. Now, General Reynier, skilful and valuable officer as he was, was unfortunately full of a self-conceit which led him to believe himself superior to most of the marshals, and to be somewhat too impatient to obtain a dignity for which he had already had to wait, he thought, too long; whilst General Bertrand, who was honoured by Napoleon's favour, and justified the honour by the most zealous application to his duties, but who was better qualified for the conduct of engineering works than the command of troops, was accustomed to display a deference which was more apparent than real, and was of a character rather obsequious than submissive. The consequence was, that Marshal Oudinot, much embarrassed by having to overrule the several pretensions of his lieutenants, only ventured to do so with an excess of delicate precaution incompatible with the prompt and vigorous exercise of a military command. Posted, however, nearer the field of action than Napoleon, and able to gather information from the rumours flying about the country, he did not allow himself, as did the latter, to entertain false news respecting the strength of the enemy and the difficulties which would be thrown in the way of the French troops by the nature of the ground. He knew that Bernadotte was at the head of a force numbering some ninety thousand excellent troops, posted in advance of Berlin, that the Prince of Sweden had detached under General Walmoden twenty thousand troops, of various nations, to make head behind the numerous Mecklenburg canals against the *corps d'armée* which had marched from Hamburg under Marshal Davout, and that the remainder of the one hundred and fifty thousand under the command of the Prince of Sweden had been devoted to the blockade or siege of the fortifications on the Oder and the Vistula. Nor did the nature of the ground lessen the difficulties of the task which he had to perform. In his march upon Berlin by a route between the Elbe and the Sprée, he would have to proceed between a double line of waters, which may be instanced, in the one case, by the river of the Dahne, which falls into the Sprée above Berlin, and in the other, by the river of the Nuthe, which falls into the Havel at Potsdam. In the bottom of the angle formed by this double

line of waters was the army of the north, established in a good position, that of Ruhlsdorf, covered with powerful artillery, and protected by an innumerable cavalry. It would be impossible for our troops, therefore, to attempt to traverse this labyrinth of woods, sands, marshes, and rivers without incurring the twofold danger of being outflanked or turned should they proceed by a single route, or should they proceed by several, of being so separated as to be incapable of affording to each other mutual support.

Distrusting, as he did, the promises which Napoleon had written to him to the effect that there would be within a few days more than a hundred thousand French troops concentrated upon Berlin, Marshal Oudinot felt an extreme repugnance for the task he had been required to undertake, and which obliged him to march through a most difficult country with sixty-four thousand troops against Berlin, protected by ninety thousand. On the 18th, however, he executed a transverse movement from right to left, and advanced from Bareuth to Luckenwalde, from whence he resumed his route northwards, advancing between Zossen and Trebbin, through the midst of that double line of waters which has been above described.

On the 21st he had reached a position opposite Trebbin, only a few leagues from the enemy's army, which began to concentrate in proportion as the ground became contracted, and we approached. Between the two lines of waters arose a series of wooded hills, and on the side of these hills ran the two roads by which it was possible to reach Berlin. One of these two roads, that on the left, leading to Trebbin, ran across a brook and up a hill, whence it issued on Gross-Beeren. That on the right, entirely separated from the preceding, after having also ascended some hills, proceeded to debouch by Blankenfelde on the right and at some distance from Gross-Beeren. Marshal Oudinot determined to advance by both these routes at once, in the first place, as a measure of precaution, since he was unwilling to incur the risk of being turned by neglecting either of them, and in the next place, because his lieutenants preferred to march separately, and he flattered himself that, divided for a time, they might afterwards easily unite for the purpose of attacking the enemy en masse.

On the 21st he attacked Trebbin with the 12th corps, threw the 4th (General Bertrand's) upon Schultzendorf, and marched the 7th (General Reynier's) between the two, towards a village named Nunsdorf. The little town of Trebbin, which was well entrenched, was occupied by a detachment of Bulow's troops, whilst Tauenzien's corps guarded the Blankenfelde route, which lay to the right. Marshal Oudinot began the attack by a cannonade upon the town, and then sent against it a brigade

of the division Puthod, whilst the 7th corps threatened to turn it by Wittstock. These combined movements produced their effect; for the Prussians, finding themselves already outflanked by the 7th corps, whilst the division Puthod attacked them in front at the bayonet's point, repassed the stream which it had been their task to defend, and fell back on the hills in the rear. In the meantime, on the right, General Bertrand had entered Schultzendorf with the 4th corps.

On the following day (the 22nd) Marshal Oudinot had the enemy's position on the brook Trebbin attacked at two points, and succeeded in forcing the troops of Bulow's corps to retire definitively to the central position chosen by the Prince-Royal of Sweden. On the opposite side, General Bertrand, after exchanging with the enemy a vigorous cannonade, reached the Juhnsdorf position leading to Blankenfelde; and thus we had made a fresh step into this species of jungle, where our troops were forced either to separate into two portions and follow two routes, which, although running parallel to each other, were almost without any means of communication from one to the other, or else in a single body to pursue one route, and be unprotected against the danger of a flank attack by the enemy. It would doubtless have been possible to obviate this inconvenience by marching with the bulk of the troops along one route, and moving along the other only some detachments of light troops; but such a course would have rendered it necessary to break up the various corps, and to exercise over their several commanders an authority which Marshal Oudinot did not venture to assume.

Hoping that the enemy would not be met until after our troops had passed Gross-Beeren, and until they should have had time to effect a junction, he appointed, with an excess of complaisance, a separate task to each of his lieutenants, deciding that General Bertrand should proceed by the right route to take possession of Blankenfelde, after which he was to advance to Gross-Beeren; and that General Reynier should proceed to the same place by the route on the left, marching on the side of the hills, and following the skirts of the woods. As for himself, he resolved, instead of marching with the 12th corps, which was under his own more immediate command, behind General Reynier, so as to afford him support should he require it—he resolved, we say, to proceed on the other slope of the hills along which the general was to pursue his march, as though he were afraid that even his mere presence might inflict upon his lieutenants a disagreeable feeling of restraint.

On the morning of the 28th of August the several generals entrusted with the execution of the above arrangements began to carry them into effect. On the right route, General Bertrand

advanced to the front of the Blankenfelde height, and finding General Tauenzien strongly posted there, was compelled to exchange a furious cannonade with him. In the meantime General Reynier advanced without difficulty along the hills on the other side of which marched Marshal Oudinot, and debouching before Gross-Beeren, immediately attacked that village and took it. With ill-judged impatience, however, he then, instead of establishing himself in the position he had taken, advanced beyond it, and forthwith found himself with only eighteen thousand men, of whom but one-third were French, in the presence of fifty thousand of the enemy; the whole army of the Prince of Prussia being in position in front of him at Ruhlsdoff, whilst on the right was the division of General Borstell, which had fallen back on Bulow's Prussian corps, situated at the centre, but yet somewhat to the left of the Swedish army, whilst the Russian troops were decidedly on the left.

Oudinot was far from anxious to measure his strength with the force now opposed to him; but it was scarcely probable that he would now be able to avoid a contest, and the Prussian troops under General Bulow were in fact excessively eager to be permitted to post themselves on the route by which he was attempting to reach Berlin. Bernadotte, however, hesitated; not only fearing that the events of a single day might destroy the prestige with which he had endeavoured to surround himself in the midst of strangers, by declaring that it was to him Napoleon owed the greater part of his success; but also shrinking from compromising the safety of the Swedish army, which he knew not how to replace should it be destroyed. General Bulow, on the other hand, distrusting, in common with all the Prussians, Bernadotte's loyalty even more than his valour, did not await his commands, but immediately advanced against General Reynier with the thirty thousand men under his command. This step rendered it impossible for Bernadotte any longer to hesitate, but still being unwilling to engage all his forces, he contented himself with directing his cavalry together with a large number of cannon against Reynier's left, his right being threatened by the division of Borstell. General Reynier, who in the actual presence of danger displayed all the valour proper to an old officer of the army of the Rhine, held his own against the forces which now beset him, but made a retrograde movement for the purpose of taking up a better position, in which his right rested upon Gross-Beeren, and his left on a height from which his cannon could direct a plunging fire upon the enemy. The Prussians, however, inspired by the desire of saving Berlin, and also of seizing a prey which they regarded as almost within their grasp, advanced with great resolution;

and the Saxon troops, who formed the bulk of his force, giving way, and leaving his French troops unsupported, Reynier was compelled to retreat; doing so, however, in good order, and in such a manner as to deprive the enemy of any wish to pursue him. Marshal Oudinot, who had hastened up to the scene of contest with the utmost expedition, arrived too late to change the fate of the engagement, but nevertheless performed good service in checking the enemy's pursuit, and many times sustained unbroken the shock of the Russian cavalry. Ultimately each of our corps returned to the position it had occupied in the morning; the 7th corps in a state of disorganisation from the complete rout of the Saxons, more than two thousand of whom had been taken prisoners, together with fifteen pieces of cannon, whilst many others had deserted their ranks, some to join the Swedes, and some simply to fly to the rear. In the meantime General Bertrand had made great but ineffectual endeavours to overcome the resistance offered to his progress by Tauenzien at Blankenfelde, and had refrained from pushing his efforts to the utmost point, because he believed that the success of the chief corps at Gross-Beeren would be sufficient to compel Tauenzien to leave the position he then occupied.

Had the troops at our general's disposal been entirely composed of Frenchmen, and such as could have been relied on, the check they had now suffered need not have been followed by any great consequences, for our loss, after all, only amounted to two thousand men. But consisting as these troops did, half of Italians and Germans, who were ever ready to desert our ranks, and half of young French troops, who had at first been too confident of victory, and were now too dispirited by defeat, it was difficult indeed to continue to march upon Berlin in the presence of ninety thousand men. Already more than ten thousand of the Saxon and Bavarian troops had quitted us, crying *saufé qui peut*; and altogether the state of affairs was such that Marshal Oudinot considered that it was advisable to retreat in the direction of the Elbe. On the following day, the 24th, he commenced his retrograde movement, and executed it in good order, in spite of the vigorous pursuit of the Prussians, who were intoxicated with joy and pride, and believed us to be more completely vanquished than was really the case. Marshal Oudinot might have stopped and given a check to their ardour; but as the result of a successful engagement would only have been to enable him to maintain a position between Berlin and Wittenberg, in a country which offered neither support nor resources, he considered it more prudent to fall back under the cannon of the latter place, where he would be secure from danger, would cover the Elbe, and be able to procure an abundant supply of provisions.

He arrived there on the 29th and 30th of August. In the meantime the active Magdeburg division had sallied from this place under the command of General Gerard, and after an engagement with General Hirschfeld and Czernicheff's Russian skirmishers, had been compelled to retreat before overwhelming numbers, and to re-enter Magdeburg with the loss of a thousand men and several cannon. In the neighbourhood of Hamburg, Marshal Davout had advanced with thirty thousand troops, of whom ten thousand were Danes, in the direction of Schwerin, and having forced the Anglo-German legion, which was before him, to fall back, he was ready to continue his movement as soon as he should receive information of Marshal Oudinot's success in the environs of Berlin. In the meantime, however, he was compelled to act with much circumspection.

As soon as it became a fact that Marshal Oudinot could not reach Berlin, the concentration which Napoleon had hoped to be able to effect of more than a hundred thousand men on that capital became nothing more than an idle dream. And although the failure of this scheme was certainly in some degree due to the error of Marshal Oudinot and his lieutenants, it was principally the result of Napoleon's own fault, in despising over much what he called Bernadotte's ragged regiment, and in relying too confidently on the junction at Berlin of corps setting out from such widely separated points as Wittenberg, Magdeburg, and Hamburg.

It was the consciousness of those serious miscalculations, and not a malady invented by flatterers, which had surprised Napoleon on the morrow of his victories on the 26th and 27th of August, and which, having drawn him from Pirna to Dresden, retained him there during the 29th and 30th of August, whilst Vandamme remained unsupported at Kulm. These miscalculations were of extreme importance—for to have, instead of Macdonald victorious in Silesia and pursuing Blucher, Blucher victorious and Macdonald routed; and to have, instead of a hundred thousand of his troops in Berlin, Oudinot fallen back upon Wittenberg with the loss of ten thousand men, Gerard driven back into Magdeburg with the loss of a thousand, and Davout compelled with his thirty thousand troops to hesitate in the midst of the Mecklenburg marshes, was a state of things very different from that which Napoleon had hoped to bring about when he attempted to extend his scheme of operations from the Elbe to the Vistula. On the 30th, when he was still ignorant of Vandamme's defeat, which he only learned on the following morning, he had conceived a new and vast plan of operations. He had already frequently entertained the idea of a plan of operations, a new element in which consisted of a march upon Prague, for the purpose of striking a blow at



Austria by the capture of one of its capitals, and to a certain extent crushing the coalition at its chief headquarters. But there were serious objections to this plan; for it would be necessary in carrying it out to cross the mountains of Bohemia, and thus incur the danger, should we be vanquished beyond them, of having to retreat through a series of frightful defiles, and would also, even if the capture of Prague could be effected, cause a prolongation of his line, already too long, to the amount of all the distance which divides Dresden from Prague. But even had not these difficulties been sufficient to remove from his mind any idea of carrying this plan into execution, the reverses suffered by Macdonald and Oudinot would at once have done so; and he now, on hearing what rendered it impossible to entertain the idea of withdrawing to any distance from those marshals, and made him only anxious to approach them, forthwith conceived, with that inexhaustible fertility of genius which was one of his attributes, a plan in accordance with which Berlin instead of Dresden would be the centre of its operations.

The plan which Napoleon now proposed to carry into execution was, to march upon Berlin with his guard and half the cavalry reserve, that is, with 40,000 men, to effect a junction between Oudinot's troops and his own, en route to vanquish Bernadotte, to enter Berlin, to summon thither the division Gerard and Davout's corps, to concentrate by this means on the Prussian capital the 100,000 men on whose presence there he had so much relied; and after taking measures for the re-victualling and reinforcement of our garrisons at Stettin and Custrin, and those on the Vistula, to return to Luckau, between Berlin and Dresden, ready to fall upon Blücher's flank, should the latter venture to march upon the Elbe.

To cover Dresden during his absence he resolved to leave there Vandamme with the first corps (for, on the morning of the 30th, when he formed these projects, he was unacquainted with the disaster at Kulm), and besides Vandamme, St. Cyr, Victor, and Marmont, with a portion of the cavalry reserve. He proposed to place those forces, which would amount to 100,000 men, under the command of Murat, who, he hoped, would be able to maintain himself against any attack of the enemy, until his own return from striking a decisive blow at Berlin should render such an attack altogether unlikely.

When the expedition to Berlin should have been concluded, it was Napoleon's intention to establish himself at Luckau, between Berlin and Dresden, to summon thither Marmont's corps and all the cavalry reserve, to leave at Dresden and in the Camp de Pirna 60,000 men, to post 60,000 at Bautzen, and with 60,000 others to be ready to throw himself either

upon Berlin, or Bautzen, or Dresden, as circumstances might render advisable. In this position it was certain that he would be able to meet any occasion that might arise, for, posted at three marches from Berlin, he would be on Blücher's flank, and sufficiently near to Dresden to reach it in time should the army of Bohemia present itself before it.

Such was the plan which he formed on the morning of the 30th August; a plan for the execution of which he had already issued the necessary orders, when the news of the disaster at Kulm arrived to destroy the whole fabric of its vast conception. He was much distressed by this news of the disaster suffered by Vandamme, and for the first time entertained the idea that he had probably presumed too much on his strength when he rejected the conditions offered him at Prague. But although he remained for a day dismayed, so to say, by those redoubled strokes of misfortune, his spirit recovered its energy and even its illusions on the morrow, and he then formed a new plan, which, although less vast than the preceding one, was quite as finely conceived. In the first place, he resolved to appoint another commander-in-chief to the three corps which were to march upon Berlin, and selected Marshal Ney, who was inferior to none in courage on the field of battle, but who had never as yet directed the movements of great armies. Napoleon chose him, however, because his intrepid and confident spirit had not, as yet suffered the chill of discouragement which had already visibly affected our other generals, and sent him to Wittenberg, dismissing him with the most encouraging words and the most precise instructions.

Having ordered Ney, after he should have rallied and reorganised the 7th, 4th, and 12th corps (Marshal Oudinot was to retain the direct command of the latter), to proceed to Bareuth, situated two days' march from Berlin, and there await further orders from headquarters, Napoleon resolved to proceed himself to Hoyerswerda, distant three days' march from Bareuth, and two from Dresden, together with the guard, the greater portion of the cavalry reserve, and Marmont's corps. Posted there in Lusatia, between Berlin and Görlitz, he would be able at will to move to the left upon Berlin, and assist Ney to enter that city, or to throw himself upon the right upon Blücher's flank, should the latter, continuing to press Macdonald, become a source of anxiety on account of Dresden. Certainly no combination could have been devised more skilful or more appropriate to existing circumstances than this, every element of which was profoundly calculated, true, and just, and which was such a one as could not have failed to succeed ten years earlier, when our soldiers had maintained unscathed the severe chances of war, when our generals were full of confidence, when

Napoleon had as much reliance on others as on himself, and when his enemies, less firmly resolved to vanquish or to die, were not so determined as they now were to persevere in spite of the most disastrous defeats. But at the time of which we now treat, such was the moral state of ourselves and our enemies that everything was uncertain, even although our generals and soldiers were still heroes.

Having given the requisite orders, Napoleon made the most skilful arrangements for the protection of Dresden during his absence; and in the first place, set himself to reorganise Vandamme's corps, of which, besides the 42nd division, which had been restored to St. Cyr, and had suffered but little, about fifteen thousand men of all arms had returned to their ranks. But all its artillery had been lost, together, unfortunately, with some of its most distinguished officers. Nothing was known of the fate of Vandamme and Haxo, and they both were believed to have perished. When Vandamme's secretary reappeared, Napoleon had the general's papers seized, that he might extract from it all his military correspondence, and thus remove all proof of the orders which this unfortunate officer had received from him. Napoleon had even the weakness to deny that he had given him orders to march upon Töplitz, and wrote to all the commanders of corps, that this general, having received instructions to halt upon the heights of Kulm, had been carried away by a too ardent spirit, and been destroyed through an excess of zeal. The authentic narrative which we have given of the actual facts proves the falsity of these assertions, which were devised by Napoleon for the purpose of aiding him to preserve that influence over the minds of his generals which at that moment it was so important he should possess.

Napoleon's first care was to find for Vandamme's corps a commander who should be as brave as himself, but more circumspect; and he selected for this purpose the Count de Lobau, an officer who possessed and deserved his entire confidence, and who united to great address and rare courage the talent and taste for the organisation of troops. Having thus given to the first corps a general so well qualified to restore to it the military spirit it might have lost through the disaster it had suffered at Kulm, Napoleon distributed it into three divisions, of ten battalions each; and having restored to it the half of the division Teste, which had been temporarily borrowed from it, and taken from it the brigade Reuss, which had been temporarily lent to it, raised it to an effective force of eighteen thousand men, whom he had supplied from the Dresden arsenals with muskets and sixty-four pieces of cannon.

For the defence of Dresden in his absence he left the 14th corps (Marshal St. Cyr) at the Camp de Pirna, the 2nd (Marshal

Victor's) at Freiberg, and lastly, the 1st (Count Lobau's) in Dresden itself. In case the army of Bohemia should again make its appearance, Marshal St. Cyr and Marshal Victor (between whom Pajol's cavalry was to execute an active surveillance) would be able, Napoleon considered, to retard its progress sufficiently long to give Dresden ample notice of its approach. As, however, these corps would ultimately have to fall back upon Dresden, Napoleon ordered that St. Cyr should post himself upon the left at the entrenched camp, where he had already fought valiantly on the 26th August, and Victor on the right, where he had decided in our favour the issue of the battle of the 27th. Should the enemy attack them seriously in these positions, they were to retire behind the redoubts, which were increased from five to eight, and were much better armed. Napoleon nominated an officer to the special command of each redoubt; and also directed that reserve troops should be stationed behind each for the purpose of retaking it immediately should it fall into the enemy's hands. Lastly, he directed that, during an attack, Lobau's corps should be posted in reserve behind those of St. Cyr and Victor, for the purpose of debouching at the last moment, as the guard had done on the 26th August, on the enemy, at the very instant it believed itself victorious. These arrangements were, it will be observed, a repetition with many improvements of those made on the 26th August, and promised to bring about the same successful results, for the three corps of St. Cyr, Victor, and Lobau numbered altogether sixty thousand men, which was a larger force than Napoleon had had at his disposal when he had had to resist on that day the two hundred thousand troops of the army of Bohemia. Napoleon felt, therefore, that he need entertain no fear for the safety of Dresden in his absence should the army of Bohemia, repeating its recent manœuvre, operate on the left bank of the Elbe. And should it, on the other hand, changing its line of march, attack Poniatowski and Macdonald by the right flank, he himself, falling back upon it, would be in a position to crush it. Having made these arrangements, he sent to Königsbrock, on the left of the Bautzen route, in the direction of Hoyerswerda, a portion of the cavalry and infantry of the guard, under Nansouty and Curial respectively; determining to send the remainder in the same direction on the following day. He resolved to set out for Hoyerswerda in person on the 4th, leaving M. de Bassano at Dresden for the purpose of transmitting to him information of all that might take place, and giving his orders to the several generals whom they might concern.

On the morning of the 3rd, Napoleon received despatches from Marshal Macdonald, who was, to quote Napoleon's own expression, utterly disconcerted by the vehement manner in

which he had been pressed by Blucher, who had hastened to advance as soon as the waters had somewhat subsided, for the purpose of reaping as much advantage as possible from the affair of Katzbach, and constantly outflanking Marshal Macdonald's left wing, had compelled him to retreat from Löwenberg to Lobau, from Lobau to Görlitz. And now, according to him, if he were not immediately succoured, he would very probably be driven from Görlitz to Bautzen, or even to Dresden.

Napoleon immediately perceived that it was not the time to put into execution his intended movement upon Hoyerswerda, and that to succour Macdonald by the speediest method possible was the only course suited to the circumstances at the moment. He determined, therefore, to join him at Bautzen, and uniting his forces with his own, to advance and drive Blucher before him beyond the Neisse, the Gneiss, and all the rivers which he had passed. Having taken this resolution, he rescinded the command which had been given on the previous evening to portions of the infantry and cavalry of the guard, changing the direction of their march from Königsbruck to Bautzen by Camenz. At the same time he made arrangements for the arrival at Bautzen on the 4th of the remainder of the guard, of Latour-Maubourg's cavalry reserve, and Marshal Marmont's infantry. He sent word to Macdonald of the important movement he was effecting towards Bautzen, but recommended him to keep the matter secret, in order that Blucher, being unwarned, might have to encounter the bulk of the French army. Finally, he sent orders to Marshal Ney to change the direction of his march for the present from Hoyerswerda towards Bautzen.

On the evening of the 3rd of September, Napoleon set out from Dresden, and after a halt of some hours at Harta, arrived on the following day at Bautzen, where he received Marshal Macdonald with much kindness, openly acknowledging the difficulties he had had to encounter; and where he endeavoured to remain incognito until the arrival of the guard and Latour-Maubourg should enable him to throw himself upon Blucher with sufficient forces. But unfortunately the Prussian general had already been informed of the movements made by the guard on the morning of the 2nd, a sufficient indication to him of Napoleon's intentions, and faithful to his plan of falling back as soon as Napoleon should appear, he immediately halted the main body of his army at Görlitz, and took up his own position on the height called the Land's Crown, from whence a view could be obtained of the whole country from Görlitz to Bautzen.

On the 4th of September, towards the middle of the day, Latour-Maubourg and Nansouty having arrived, Murat placed himself at the head of their squadrons, and galloping down upon

Blucher's advanced guard, which they encountered towards the close of the day at Wittenberg, compelled them to retreat with the loss of some hundreds of men. Blucher immediately resolved to repass the Neisse on the following day, leaving at Görlitz only a rearguard to occupy a portion of the town situated on one side of the river, whilst preparations were being made for the destruction of the bridges.

On the following morning, Napoleon set out at the head of his advanced guard, hoping to inflict such a blow on the Prussians as should render them disinclined to make a very speedy return; but on entering Görlitz, where he took or slew a thousand of the enemy's troops which still remained there, he found to his disappointment that Blucher was in full retreat, and that to pursue him would only be uselessly to fatigue his own troops, and to remove himself to an imprudent distance from Dresden. He resolved, therefore, to halt at Görlitz, spending two or three days there for the purpose of repairing the bridges, refreshing his own troops, and reanimating those of Marshal Macdonald. But on that very evening he received despatches from Dresden which made him change his plan; for they announced the reappearance of the army of Bohemia on the Peterswalde route, that is, in the rear of Dresden, precisely as it had formerly appeared at the period of the battles of the 26th and 27th of August. Napoleon himself believed that it was a mere demonstration for the purpose of withdrawing him from the pursuit of Blucher, and if he had had any hope of coming up with the latter, he would not have allowed himself so readily to be turned back. As, however, Blucher was already out of reach, and there was no useful purpose to be gained by his remaining at Görlitz, he immediately returned to Bautzen, where, by travelling during the whole evening and night, he arrived at two o'clock on the following morning. Finding on his arrival there that the threatened attack of the army of Bohemia appeared to be a serious one, he sent word to Dresden that he would himself be there by the evening of that same day (the 6th), together with the whole of his guard. As, however, he was not thoroughly convinced in his own mind of the seriousness of this demonstration on the part of the enemy, and was unwilling to give up his projected march upon Hoyerswerda, from whence he would be able at one and the same time to support Ney towards Berlin, and to hold Blucher in check towards Görlitz, he only sent back towards Dresden the forty thousand men of his guard. At the same time he directed Marmont, who was marching to rejoin him, to proceed towards Camenz and Königsbruck, from whence he might readily be recalled to Dresden, or pushed forward upon Hoyerswerda. He added to the troops already under his command a strong detachment

of cavalry, for the purpose of enabling him to pursue the Cossacks, and to form and to maintain communications with Ney and Macdonald. He desired Marshal Macdonald, after he should have replaced Poniatowski at the Zittau débouché, to establish himself at Bautzen, and to endeavour at least to preserve the line of the Sprée. Marshal Macdonald, with a modesty which does him honour, entreated Napoleon with much earnestness to relieve him of the command in chief, offering to remain simply as a chief of division at the head of the 11th corps; but Napoleon had no longer any choice of generals, for they disappeared as rapidly as his troops, and he therefore used his utmost exertions to reanimate Macdonald's courage, consoling him and treating him as he would have treated him had he been victorious. He then set out for Dresden, where he arrived on the morning of the 7th.

Having stayed a day or two at Dresden, he departed for Pirna, and halted near Mugelin, where he found Marshal St. Cyr's rearguard. Let us now direct our attention to what had been taking place in this direction. The Prussians and Russians, without the Austrians, had debouched by the great Peterswalde route already described, had attempted to obtain possession on the one side of the Pirna plateau, on the other of the Gieshübel plateau, and had driven before them the four divisions of Marshal St. Cyr, who occupied these several positions. Another corps, under Count Pahlen, debouching by the Furstenwalde route, which Kleist had followed since the affair of Kulm, had come towards Bornä, where the mountains begin to lose their elevation and sink into the plain. An immense body of cavalry thrown by the enemy in this direction had caused considerable anxiety to ours under Pajol, and would, but for this officer's energy and skill, have inflicted upon it heavy loss.

St. Cyr, finding himself thus pressed, had withdrawn from the camp at Pirna upon Pirna itself his 42nd division, leaving some battalions in the fortress of Königstein, at the same time removing the 43rd and 44th from Gieshübel to Zehist, and the 45th, which supported Pajol, from Bornä to Dohna.

It was in this position that Napoleon found St. Cyr, and he did not neglect the opportunity of consulting with him with respect to this fresh appearance of the enemy, which he himself was strongly inclined to regard as having no serious object, and as being one of those mere manœuvres which at this time appeared to form the whole system of the enemy's tactics. Marshal St. Cyr, however, appeared to be of a different opinion, considering that the vigour with which the Prince of Schwarzenberg had pushed the divisions of the 14th corps during the last two days proved that he was resolved

upon making a serious attack, and that he would not have advanced so close to Dresden had his object been a simple demonstration. Notwithstanding this difference of opinion, however, both Napoleon and St. Cyr were agreed as to the course to be pursued, since they each of them considered it advisable to engage the army of Bohemia, should it be willing, in a pitched battle. Napoleon quitted Marshal St. Cyr to return the same day to Dresden, where he had orders of all kinds to give to his various *corps d'armée*.

To understand properly the difficulties surrounding the commander-in-chief of our forces at this time, we should turn our attention to what had been taking place on the side of the allies. Immediately on receiving information of Napoleon's march into Lusatia, the Austrians had executed a retrograde movement, recrossing the Elbe between Tetschen and Leitmeritz; this movement being made with the double object, in the first place of providing against unforeseen events, such as the prosecution by Napoleon of operations against Prague, and in the next place of affording the Austrian army the opportunity of recovering in some degree from the rude shock it had suffered in the battle of Dresden. The Russian and Prussian troops had been left on the great Peterswalde route, in order to withdraw Napoleon in that direction by means of extensive demonstrations, and thus free the army of Silesia, against which he was marching, from his attack. And Wittgenstein and Kleist, who commanded the Russian and Prussian troops under Barclay de Tolly, had not been slack in executing the demonstrations with which they were charged, having fallen upon the four divisions of Marshal St. Cyr, and put all his strength and skill to the proof. At the same time Klenau, who was posted between Commotau and Chemnitz, occupied in obviating as far as possible the effect of the blow his troops had received before Dresden, sent Partisans to Zwickau and Chemnitz, preparing for that decisive operation which the allies ever meditated carrying into execution on our rear; but this time in the direction of Leipsic instead of in that of Dresden.

In the meantime a great series of events had been taking place on our wings. It will be remembered that on setting out for Dresden, in the first place to proceed to Hoyerswerda, and then to turn back towards Bautzen, Napoleon had arranged to meet Ney at Bareuth, with the intention of either supporting Ney in a march upon Berlin, or of marching upon that city himself. Marshal Ney had accordingly set out, and arriving at Wittenberg on the 3rd, had immediately received the three *corps d'armée* of which he was to have the command in chief in the place of Marshal Oudinot, and which, since the check



they had suffered at Gross-Beeren, were much weakened, not only in point of numbers, but also in respect of matériel and spirit. Ney, however, who had scarcely ever held a command in chief, although he frequently had had under his direct orders large assemblages of troops, thought little of the real nature of his instruments in his eagerness to employ them, and reviewing his troops on the 4th, announced his intention of putting them in motion on the following day (the 5th).

The French army was posted in a semicircle before Wittenberg, the 7th corps (that of General Reynier) on the left, the 12th (that of Marshal Oudinot) in the centre, the 4th (that of General Bertrand) on the right; the army of the north pressing them so closely that the advanced posts were engaged in perpetual skirmishes. Acting in this case with much address, Marshal Ney left his right, formed by the 4th corps, in the presence of the enemy during the whole morning of the 5th, and commenced his projected movement with the centre of his army, composed of the 12th corps, which he carried behind his right in the direction of Zahne, which place he took from the enemy, crossing a little stream which ran through it, in spite of considerable resistance. The 7th, which formed the left, followed the 12th, supporting it in its movement on Zahne, and when they had both defiled, the 4th, having sufficiently occupied the enemy's attention, raised its camp in its turn and joined the rest of the army, which thus in one day found itself brought back to Seyda, five leagues to the right of Wittenberg. This movement, which was executed with both skill and courage, had cost us a thousand men; the loss on the side of the Prussians being double that number.

On the 6th it was necessary to proceed to Juterbock, from whence a single march would bring the army to Barenth. Marshal Ney decided that General Bertrand, who continued to form the right wing, and whose troops had been less directly in contact with the enemy on the previous day, should commence the march towards Juterbock on the following morning at about eight o'clock, General Reynier following with the 7th, and Marshal Oudinot with the 12th. Close as the enemy were, it would have been easier to have marched *en masse*, especially during the execution of a flank march with fifty thousand men who were opposed to an enemy numbering eighty thousand. But the fact was, that the three corps were at a distance of two hours from each other; an inconvenience which was much increased by the circumstance that the line of march lay over a sandy plain, from which a high wind raised clouds of thick dust, which rendered it impossible to see to any distance.

From eight o'clock to noon the army continued its march, constantly harassed by the enemy's cavalry, which ours had

great difficulty in holding in check, and whose movements rendered it impossible to doubt that Bernadotte was aware of our plan, and was hurrying forward en masse to bar against us the Juterbock road. However, it was still very possible for our troops, should they reach the Dennewitz defile before the enemy had arrived at it in any force, to force the passage, and be the first to reach Juterbock, where the French army would be out of danger, and the Prince of Sweden compelled to follow without hope of reaching us.

About noon our troops were suddenly assailed by a fire of musketry, and found that they were in the presence of Tauenzien's corps, which on the previous day they had driven before them, and that they were close to the Dennewitz defile, which was the only obstacle of any difficulty which had to be surmounted on the whole of this vast plain. It will be well to give here some description of this defile.

Transversely in front of our army flowed a stream, which was somewhat shallow, but flowed between very marshy banks, and was only fordable at two places, namely, Dennewitz and Rohrbeck. This stream, after having flowed from our left towards our right, changed its direction at Rohrbeck, from which place it flowed right before us as far as Juterbock, a little town in front of which it passed with many windings. As the road, which it was absolutely necessary we should follow, for the sake of the conveyance of our park of artillery through this ocean of sand, traversed Dennewitz, we had no alternative but to force our way at this place; and Marshal Ney issued accordingly immediate orders to that effect.

\* The Italian division Fontanelli took the lead; its general at the head of some battalions entering Dennewitz, and crossing the stream, in spite of a Prussian detachment which attempted to oppose him. But it was not at the village of Dennewitz, but beyond it, that the enemy, posted in favourable positions extending opposite our left, was prepared to resist our progress with his whole force. Fortunately there was only present Tauenzien's corps; Bulow's corps, the Swedes, and the Russians being still far distant.

The Italian division had scarcely passed the village of Dennewitz, when the enemy threw upon it a cloud of cavalry and a heavy fire of artillery; it nevertheless remained unshaken. On issuing from Dennewitz our troops found themselves on a plain, bounded in the distance by woods, on the left by some hills surmounted by a mill, and at some distance on the right by Juterbock. On the left, close to the Dennewitz mill, Ney placed the division Morand, the efficiency of which was doubled by General Morand's own presence with it in the centre, the Italian division, and the Wurtemberg division on the right, in

the direction of Jüterbock. Our artillery, posted on the more prominent slopes, dominated Tauenzien's, and even succeeded in silencing it. The enemy's cavalry, however, charged, and drove back our own so vigorously that some of our squadrons precipitated themselves across the spaces between the Italian battalions, which dared not fire lest they should fire on their own friends; in consequence of which two of these battalions were broken by the enemy's cavalry, and caused some confusion in our line. Perceiving this, General Morand carried forward two battalions of the 13th on the left, and covering our broken line, gave it time to re-form. The whole of the Prussian cavalry poured down upon him, but he received them in square, and repulsed all their efforts. In the meantime, however, Bulow's corps, consisting of fifty-five thousand Prussians, was already appearing towards our left, debouching from Niedergorsdorf, whilst Reynier and Oudinot, on the other hand, were as yet nowhere to be seen. As Bulow's columns debouched from Niedergorsdorf they encountered two battalions of the 13th, which Morand had posted on an eminence on the left, to serve as a point d'appui to our line of battle, and compelled them to fall back. Ney, however, advancing with two battalions of the 8th, which also belonged to the division Morand, recovered the ground which the two battalions of the 13th had been compelled to yield. At the same time he sent officers to Reynier and Oudinot with messages hastening their arrival. The whole of Bulow's corps deployed, but Morand's division still contrived to make head against it, and to support with fifteen thousand men the assaults of almost forty thousand.

For three hours this unequal struggle lasted with varying chances of success; the enemy, however, being unable to compel us to abandon the débouche which we had gained beyond the Dennewitz brook. In the meantime the Russian and Swedish army was perceived advancing rapidly upon the village of Gölsdorf, situated on our left, at right angles with the stream which we had passed, and threatening to cut off the communications between our troops which were engaged and the 12th corps which was still en route.

In accordance with Ney's orders, Reynier, as soon as he had come up with the 7th corps, sent forward Durutte's division, and posted it behind Dennewitz, on the hither side of the stream, where it seized the opportunity offered by a gentle eminence to make good use of its artillery. At the same time he threw the Saxon division Lecoc upon Gölsdorf, holding the second Saxon division (Lestoc's) in reserve. As soon as these arrangements had been made, General Durutte, advancing to the top of the angle described by our line, stopped short the progress of the Prussians, who were debouching from Nieder-

Görsdorf; whilst the brigade Mellentin, of the Saxon division Lestoc, forced its way into Gölsdorf, and driving out the Prussians, prevented them from establishing themselves on our left. The combat continued to be carried on with a species of desperation on each side in the midst of clouds of dust, which hid from the view of the combatants every object but the troops to which they might be directly opposed.

At length Oudinot came up, passed behind the corps which had preceded him, and piercing the storm which threatened our left, on which side forty thousand Swedes and Russians were marching upon Gölsdorf, placed two of his divisions behind Lestoc's Saxons, and held the third in reserve.

But at this moment, when the arrival of Oudinot rendered it quite possible that Ney might still be able to make head with his fifty thousand troops against the eighty thousand of the enemy, and succeed in reaching Jüterbock without a check—at this very moment a combined attack made by Tauenzien's corps and half that of Bulow upon the troops of General Bertrand, already thinned by the long conflict in which they had been engaged, compelled them about four o'clock, when they had already lost more than three thousand men, to fall back a little to the right in the direction of Rohrbeck. Ney, too much engrossed with what was taking place immediately under his own eyes, and neglecting to take a sufficiently broad view of the general aspect of the field of battle, feared that Dennewitz would be left uncovered by Bertrand's movement, and ordered Reynier to post the division Durutte at Dennewitz itself. At the same time he ordered Oudinot to proceed from Gölsdorf, where he served as support to the Saxons, to Rohrbeck, for the purpose of forming a reserve behind Bertrand—an arrangement in which there was a double fault, for our right, since Bertrand's approach to Rohrbeck, was in less danger than our left, which was threatened by forty thousand of the enemy, and which had no sooner been carried into execution than the Russian division Borstell, supported by a cloud of cavalry and the whole of the Russian and Swedish artillery, attacked Gölsdorf and wrested it from the Saxon division Mellentin, by which it was occupied, and which, perceiving the mass of the Swedish and Russian troops advancing towards them, commenced a movement of retreat, which was turned into a flight by a rumour propagated by perfidious alarmists, that the clouds of dust raised by Oudinot's troops in their movement from Gölsdorf towards Rohrbeck were evidence that the French army had been turned by the enemy's cavalry. Flying precipitately at this rumour, in spite of all Reynier's efforts, the Saxon troops deserted Gölsdorf, left our left entirely uncovered, and rushed

in confusion through the midst of the ranks of the 12th corps. Unfortunately all the artillery and baggage waggons were accumulated in the interior of the angle formed by our line of battle, and a scene of frightful confusion ended in what was a complete rout. The division Durutte, Oudinot and Bertrand, did indeed retreat in good order, but the battle was nevertheless completely lost, for we had been compelled to give way, and the Juterbock route being now closed, we had entirely failed in the object we had had in view. Six or seven of our own, and eight or nine thousand of the enemy's troops, strewed the plain; but ten or twelve thousand of ours, chiefly Saxons and Bavarians, were in precipitate flight, about to proclaim on the Elbe that the French army had been routed and even destroyed.

As it was impossible to fall back upon Wittenberg, which our army had left seven or eight leagues to the left on its march towards Juterbock, the only possible line of retreat was in the direction of Torgau, and thither accordingly Ney retreated with the thirty-two thousand men of which his force now consisted, and arriving there on the 8th September, found what he called a *specics of hell*. For, besides the discontent which widely prevailed amongst the troops, the recriminations which freely passed between himself and his lieutenants, the crowd of fugitives which had to be reduced into something like order, and difficulty of supplying the necessities of the troops at a time when the enemy was almost at the very gates of Torgau, there was great fear that the Saxons might at any moment rise in insurrection. Open acts of disaffection had already been committed by them, and indeed, considering the circumstances of the last twelve days, it would have been wonderful, perhaps, if the case had been otherwise. Finding things in this state, Ney, as Macdonald and Oudinot had done, wrote to the emperor, entreating him to release him from his command. "I would rather," he said, "be a simple grenadier than a general on such conditions. I am perfectly ready to shed the last drop of my blood, but let it be for some useful end."

Whilst these events had been taking place, Napoleon had entered Dresden on the evening of the 7th, and had been recalled to Pirna on the morning of the 8th, to support Marshal St. Cyr against the Russians and Prussians, who appeared resolved to make their demonstration against him a serious attack. The enemy having failed to perceive the guard and the cavalry reserve, the presence of which was always a sign of Napoleon's own, had persisted in the aggressive movement; and St. Cyr having fallen back as far as the little river, the Müglitz, near Muegeln, was unwilling to retreat any farther, since to repass this river would be definitively to abandon the

heights, and to be altogether driven into the plains. When Napoleon himself arrived on the ground, he thought with Marshal St. Cyr that, with the certainty of being speedily supported, the 14th corps might venture to march en masse against the enemy; and accordingly the three divisions of this corps, being immediately formed into columns of attack, prepared to pour down upon the columns of Wittgenstein and Kleist, whereupon the latter fell back with a precipitation which gave cause for much doubt respecting what would be the course of action on the morrow.

In the course of the evening, however, an aide-de-camp arrived with the news of the loss of the battle of Dennewitz on the 6th, which formed the fourth misfortune which had happened to our arms since the two great victories of Dresden, the other three having occurred at the Katzbach, Gross-Beeren, and Kulm. This last disaster was an especially serious one; for, besides the unfortunate moral effect which must necessarily be its result, it was calculated to place in peril the lower part of the Elbe, exposing us to the danger of seeing this river crossed by the enemy on our left, whilst the army of Bohemia, descending from the Erzgebirge on our right, should threaten definitively to turn us, and effect a junction with the corps which should have passed the Elbe at Wittenberg. Napoleon at once perceived all the serious consequences that might result from this event, but nevertheless remained perfectly calm, and would permit the maliciously watchful eyes of Marshal St. Cyr to observe no trace of distress or anger against Marshal Ney. He seemed, on the contrary, to regard the position of affairs only in the light of a curious point of military art; and in familiar conversation with Marshal St. Cyr, explained with admirable critical precision, and without severity, the faults which had been committed in the short campaign of three days, begun at Wittenberg and concluded at Torgau. At the same time he appeared eager to regard these faults simply in the light of a proof of the difficulties which had had to be contended with, and displayed with respect to this matter a marvellously equitable spirit, as though a supernatural presentiment had warned him that he would himself have need of that just judgment which he was now invoking in behalf of his unfortunate generals. Carried away by the heat of conversation, he said that generals were too hasty in their operations, and that he would some day write a book in which he would lay down the principles of war so clearly as to make them easy of application by all persons. Marshal St. Cyr, on the other hand, giving rein to his spirit of contradiction, declared that neither science nor experience had anything to do with the art of war; that great generals were born such, and gained no additional skill

by the exercise of their profession; and that Napoleon himself had fought his best campaign when he was twenty-six.

But although Napoleon thus passed the evening on which he had received the news of an event which so grievously changed his position in a discussion on the art of war, he did not forget that all his arrangements had hitherto been made in the expectation that his arms would be victorious, and that preparations for the defence of his vast empire still remained to be made. He was anxious, therefore, that the fortresses of the Rhine should be immediately properly garrisoned; and as for himself to write to the Duke de Feltre that he began to doubt the possibility of maintaining his position in Germany would be a painful and even dangerous avowal, he determined to send to the minister Clarke, by M. de Bassano, a letter, written in cipher, to the effect—that the state of affairs was such as to promise a brilliant success to Napoleon's arms, but that it would nevertheless be prudent to provide for the contrary; that it was not the Russian army from which we had most to fear, but the Prussian army, this latter being considerable in numbers, whilst the spirit with which it was animated was in the highest degree ardent; that our army, notwithstanding the losses it had necessarily suffered in the victories it had already gained, was still in excellent condition and of great strength, but that the generals and officers, weary of the war, were no longer inspired with that ardour which had enabled them to perform the great deeds they had already performed; that the theatre of the war was of too wide an extent; that the emperor was victorious wherever he was himself actually present, but that he could not be everywhere; that those of his lieutenants who held isolated commands rarely answered his expectations; that after what had happened to General Vandamme, after the disasters suffered by the Duke of Tarentum in Silesia, and the Prince of Moskowa in his march on Berlin, it would be as well, whilst refraining from any excessive degree of fear, to neglect nothing which might be suggested by prudence. "You will do wisely, therefore," the note continued, "to see that the fortresses are put in a good state of defence, and to arrange with the director-general of provisions that they shall be provided with an extraordinary supply of them, so that should unexpected circumstances arise, his majesty may not experience fresh embarrassments in this direction, and that you may not be found unprepared. You will understand that in writing this I have not failed to reflect well upon all that has come under my observation, and that I am strongly convinced that in so doing I am only acting as his majesty would approve."

At an early hour on the morning of the 9th, Napoleon

proceeded to reconnoitre with his own eyes the movements of the enemy, and to give such orders as circumstances might render necessary. He had at this time under his immediate command the 1st corps, posted in advance of Zehist, on the Peterswalde route; the 14th, under Marshal St. Cyr, in position on the Furstenwalde route, in advance of Dohna. Somewhat in the rear, at Mugeln, but still near enough to perform effective service, were three divisions of the young guard under Marshal Mortier, and the light cavalry of the guard under Lefebvre-Desnoette. The remainder of the young guard, the old guard, Marmont's corps, and Latour-Maubourg's cavalry were at Dresden, ready to meet any unforeseen emergency. At some distance to the right, on the Freiberg route, Marshal Victor watched with his *corps d'armée* the Bohemian débouches opening upon Leipsic. The 1st and 14th corps and the three divisions of the young guard numbered altogether about fifty thousand men, a force sufficient to overwhelm the enemy then visible; but it was impossible for the French staff to be acquainted with the fact that the Austrians were committing the fault of retreating into Bohemia, as far as Tetschen and Leitmeritz, and it was a subject of anxious inquiry where this portion of the enemy's force could be.

Napoleon's troops, being at Zehist and Dohna, were on two routes, that of Peterswalde, which offered an excellent road for the transit of artillery, and that of Liebstadt, which was only practicable for artillery as far as Furstenwalde, by which place it passed, and which from this point was continued across the lofty mountain of Geyersberg by paths impassable by heavy vehicles. This being the case, Marshal St. Cyr now proposed that the 14th corps and the young guard should be carried rapidly along the latter route upon Liebstadt and Furstenwalde, then thrown on the enemy's column which had taken the Peterswalde route, so as to cut off a larger or smaller portion of it, and afterwards carried across the Geyersberg for the purpose of intercepting the enemy's retreat towards Bohemia.

Napoleon immediately approved of this ingenious plan, although he was by no means sure that it would be possible to cross the Geyersberg with artillery; for even if it were not, there would always be more chance of injuring the enemy on a line of march parallel to their own, than by attacking them directly by the Peterswalde route. Whilst, therefore, the Count de Lobau advanced with the 1st corps from Zehist to Gieshübel, and from Gieshübel towards Peterswalde, driving the enemy before him, Napoleon himself proceeded in a lateral direction with the 14th corps and the young guard.

In the meantime, Kleist and Wittgenstein having become informed of Napoleon's presence, although they were still in



ignorance of the arrival of the reinforcements he had brought with him, had begun to retreat, although without any great precipitation; Napoleon marching parallel with them, and hoping that on the following day he would be able to throw himself from the route he was himself following upon theirs, and take them in flank, should it be possible to convey his artillery across the mountains.

On the following morning (the 10th of September) our troops arrived at a hill from whence could be surveyed the sad scene of the events which had happened at Kulm; and where they had on their right the heights of Geyersberg, and on their left those of Nollenberg, along which ran the great Peterswalde route, just before descending into Bohemia. Napoleon crossed this hill, accompanied by Marshal St. Cyr and his light troops, and perceived at some distance off the enemy's troops hastening to repass the mountains, being in danger, should we succeed in carrying our artillery across the hill, of being compelled to make, through almost impracticable passes, a retreat which should be so disastrous as to afford us a brilliant revenge for the affair of Kulm.

But when the attempt to effect the passage of the artillery had commenced, it immediately became apparent that, despite the ardour with which the troops engaged in the work, it would be impossible to accomplish it under twenty-four hours, a time quite sufficient for the enemy to defile into the plain; and consequently, as the absence of the Austrians was only a matter of conjecture, and as even without them Kleist's and Wittgenstein's corps, including the Russian and Prussian guards which remained beyond the mountains, numbered some seventy thousand men, Napoleon considered that it would be imprudent to descend into the plain in pursuit of them, especially as many serious motives recalled him to Dresden. As soon as he found that it was impossible to cross the Geyersberg in two hours, he resolved to bring his movement in that direction to an end; but at the same time, as he was frequently assailed by the news of the irruption of the Partisans into Saxony, he resolved that his troops should remain in the position they then occupied—Marshal St. Cyr at the Geyersberg, and the Count de Lobau at the Nollenberg. His intention was, should he find these Partisans to be only the *avant-coureur* of a more considerable body now commencing the execution of a movement at Leipsic, which he had always considered probable, to hold them in check for some days by remaining above Kulm, and by this means to gain time for the execution of manœuvres proportioned to this new danger.

In accordance with this resolution, Napoleon took Marshal St. Cyr aside, and telling him that he had given up the undertaking on which he had entered, without explaining all his

motives, the details of which would have occupied too much time, and could not be prudently confessed, he ordered him to remain two days at least in a threatening position above Töplitz. Leaving the marshal in a state of great astonishment and discontent at the abandonment of an attempt from which he had expected such great results, Napoleon proceeded by Breitenau to Hollendorf, for the purpose of giving similar instructions to the Count de Lobau, and then returned to Breitenau, where he devoted the following day to an inspection of the several military positions of the surrounding country. On the next day, the 12th, he returned to Dresden.

Napoleon found himself on his return to the Saxon capital furnished with matter for serious thought, and even began to be in some degree oppressed with anxiety. The plan which had been adopted by the allies at Trachenberg of marching vigorously against his lieutenants, and of retreating from before himself, so as to exhaust him in fruitless expeditions, and then to surround and crush him, had become terribly apparent, and had been carried out with fearful determination. With marvellous clear-sightedness Napoleon discerned the plan in all its extent, and without being discouraged, perceived the formation around him of the circle of iron in which his enemies hoped to crush him. The situation in which he was now placed revealed the only defect of the plan which he had formed for the conduct of the campaign in a circle around Dresden, and which was, that he had made the radius too long, having carried it on the left as far as Berlin, in front as far as Löwenberg, and on the right as far as Peterswalde, the result being that he was too distant from his lieutenants to be able to direct and support them, and that he was compelled to execute long marches, now in one and now in another direction, wasting his own time, and wearing out not only the strength but also the spirits of his young soldiers. And of this defect Napoleon himself now became so conscious that he determined to curtail the extent of his operations so as to be in closer connection with his lieutenants.

On the resumption of hostilities Napoleon had had about three hundred and sixty thousand active troops on the Elbe, from Dresden to Hamburg, without counting the garrisons of the fortresses on the Elbe, the Oder, and the Vistula, or the troops of Augereau's corps, or of that of Prince Eugène, and of these there now remained available for service in the field no more than two hundred and fifty thousand, above a hundred thousand having been lost, not only by the ordinary chances of war, but also by desertion, which went on to an enormous extent in the ranks of our allies, and to a less extent also in our own. That disastrous disposition to disband, which fatigue, cold, and hunger had developed to such a calamitous degree in

the army which had made the expedition into Russia, began to re-appear amongst our troops which were now making the campaign in Germany in a manner which gave rise to serious anxiety.

Whilst this deplorable tendency existed amongst our own soldiers, the allies, on the other hand, so far from having suffered any loss by the defection of their troops, were constantly receiving fresh additions of strength by voluntary levies as well as by those which Russia was now procuring by great administrative efforts; the result being, that their effective force, instead of having fallen below five hundred thousand men, numbered nearly six hundred thousand, a formidable mass, to meet which Napoleon had only some two hundred and fifty thousand young and exhausted troops, who began to have somewhat less confidence in the good fortune of their leader, although they had as much trust as ever in his genius.

Unwilling as he was as yet to change the line of his operations from the Elbe to the Rhine, and impossible as it now was to make Berlin the centre of them, it remained to him only to contract the circle of his movements around Dresden, so that he might have a less distance to traverse when it might be necessary for him to advance to any point of its circumference, and also that, the extent of ground to be occupied by his troops being narrowed, he might keep on hand a stronger reserve.

Marshal Macdonald having been compelled to leave the Sprée and Bautzen by a movement which Blücher executed against Poniatowski, driving him from Zittau to Rumburg, Napoleon had given him a new position in advance of Dresden, along a little stream named the Wessnitz, which falls into the Elbe *à la hauteur* of Pirna; placing Poniatowski at Stolpen, Lauriston at Dröbnitz, Gerard at Schmiedefeld, and Souham at Radeberg. From any of these points Napoleon could receive news in one hour, and could reach them himself in two hours, or with forty thousand men in six.

At the same time Napoleon took pains to connect the position of Marshal Macdonald, which was beyond the Elbe, with that of Marshal St. Cyr, which was on this side of it, having all the accessible points of the plateaux of Pirna and Gieshübel, by which the enemy must necessarily pass on their way from Peterswalde, strongly entrenched, and posting the 42nd division of St. Cyr's corps at the former, and the three divisions of the 1st corps, under the Count de Lobau, at the latter. At the same time, as a precaution, in case the two plateaux should be forced towards their exterior edge, Napoleon had the Château de Sonnenstein entrenched at the extremity of the Pirna plateau, and similarly the Kohlberg, at the extremity of that of Gieshübel. Finally, on the right of these two positions, opposite the old Töplitz route, which ran by Liebstadt towards Borna, Napoleon

posted Marshal St. Cyr, with the three other divisions of the 14th corps, ordering him to raise strong redoubts, and to arm them with powerful batteries. He also placed, as a reserve for the divisions placed in these positions, two divisions of the young guard in the town of Pirna itself.

In addition to these precautions he had a bridge thrown across the Elbe at Pirna, so that the young guard and a portion of St. Cyr's corps might at any moment cross the Elbe, and fall upon the left of any army which should attack Macdonald; and that, on the other hand, Poniatowski might be able to rush down with a portion of Macdonald's troops upon the right of any army that should assail St. Cyr.

Marshal Victor was to remain at Freiberg, where it would be his task to watch the other débouches which, still further in the rear of Dresden, might afford opportunities to an enemy to move upon Leipzig by the Commotau and Chemnitz route. He did not precisely intercept this route at Freiberg, but could readily do so in one or two marches; and his position at this place had also the advantage that it was not so advanced as to prevent him from falling back to the position of Marshal St. Cyr, should the enemy debouch by Töplitz upon Peterswalde or Altenberg.

At the same time, as there were a great number of Partisans, not only on the grand route from Commotau to Leipzig, but also on that from Carlsbad to Zwickau, Napoleon detached Lefebvre-Desnoette, with a force of three thousand cavalry, which was to be increased to one of seven or eight thousand horse and two thousand infantry by drafts drawn from the several forces of Victor, Ney, and Margaron, for the purpose of making a vigorous pursuit of the Partisans who infested Saxony, and had intercepted some of our convoys.

With respect to Marshal Ney, who had fallen back upon Torgau, Napoleon ordered him to give more concentration to his army, and declaring the 12th corps dissolved, recalled to his side Marshal Oudinot, who had had it under his special command. In the next place, he divided the two French divisions of this corps between the 4th and 7th, and devoted what remained of the Bavarian division to the convoy of the great parks of artillery, since it could no longer be relied on in the face of the enemy. To compensate Marshal Ney for the three or four thousand men which he lost by this arrangement, he gave him the excellent Polish division Dombrowski, which had acted and was still to act with so much heroism; and now, posted between Torgau and Wittenberg with some thirty-six thousand troops, none of whom were Germans, with the exception of a few thousand Saxons, well surrounded, there was every probability that he might check a hostile army in an attempt to cross the Elbe

sufficiently long to enable other troops to be moved up to his support. And to secure him this support, Napoleon, in this instance again yielding to his tendency to aim at many things at once, posted Marshal Marmont with eighteen thousand infantry and General Latour-Maubourg with six thousand cavalry at Grossenhayn, a little beyond the Elbe, and half way from Dresden to Torgau, where, besides being ready to afford support to Marshal Ney, they would also protect the navigation from Hamburg to Dresden.

From the former of these cities we drew our principal supplies of provisions; for the fine of fifty millions of francs to which it had been condemned had been paid for the most part in corn, rice, salted meats, spirits, leather, and horses. A portion of these provisions had already been received at Dresden and consumed, and another portion which was at Torgau was already required to supply the necessities of our troops; for, despite the constant care and skill displayed by M. Daru in providing for the maintenance of the army, he had scarcely succeeded in doing so—principally because the Partisans intercepted the routes from Leipsic to Dresden, and prevented the fulfilment of the contracts entered into with the inhabitants. It would be an important advantage, therefore, of the establishment of the troops under Marmont and Latour-Maubourg at Grossenhayn, that it would secure the safe arrival of convoys by the Elbe.

Such were Napoleon's arrangements on his return to Dresden towards the middle of September. With four corps under Macdonald in advance of the Elbe, with the corps of Lobau, St. Cyr, and Victor in the rear of this river, well entrenched, and connected with each other by several bridges; with Ney guarding the Lower Elbe in the environs of Torgau; with Marmont and Latour-Maubourg posted between Torgau and Dresden, for the purpose of protecting the shores of the stream and flanking Macdonald, or of descending to the support of Ney; and lastly, with the whole of the guard concentrated at Dresden, and ready to furnish a reinforcement of forty thousand men to that one of our generals who might be endangered, without counting the seven or eight thousand cavalry who were scouring the country in our rear, in pursuit of the Partisans—with these arrangements, we say, Napoleon believed that the circle of his operations had been sufficiently reconstructed, and flattered himself that his troops would be able to pass the winter in their present positions without being compelled to exhaust themselves in useless expeditions in answer to mere demonstrations on the part of the enemy. And in this new arrangement there was but one serious inconvenience, and this was, that it would probably result in

the loss of the fortresses of the Oder and the Vistula, the numerous garrisons of which had now been blockaded during more than eight months, and would certainly be incapable of holding out beyond the autumn. These garrisons had been left in their positions in accordance with the hope which Napoleon had entertained that a battle won would enable him to return to the Vistula; and now that he could no longer rely on the fulfilment of this hope, he saw with regret that they must be lost. At the same time, so long as he could maintain his position on the Elbe, there would still be a possibility that they might be preserved; and there was fair reason to suppose that any success obtained by our arms might be followed by an armistice, one of the essential conditions of which would be our being at liberty to revictual the fortresses of the Oder and the Vistula.

Whilst he was engrossed at Dresden with these reflections, a fresh act of the enemy suddenly recalled him to Pirna. The Austrians had only separated for a short time from the Russians and Prussians for the purpose of refreshing and reorganising their troops somewhat in the rear of the theatre of war, and had now returned to Töplitz, having perceived that it was a serious fault to leave Kleist and Wittgenstein alone in front of the French grand army. As soon as Wittgenstein had become informed of their return, he resolved, on the morning of the 13th of September, to repass the mountains and to appear once more in front of the camp of Pirna and Gieshübel.

Having persuaded, without much difficulty, the Prussian general Kleist to adopt his own views, they returned to the charge against St. Cyr and Lobau, and especially the latter. Unfortunately the works which Napoleon had directed to be executed on the 11th at Langen-Hennersdorf, Gieshübel, and Borna could not be completed by the 13th, and the Count de Lobau was consequently compelled to fall back upon Gieshübel, as he had so often done before. This being the case, it only remained for Napoleon to make a fresh movement towards the mountains of Bohemia, for the purpose of once more driving back beyond them the troublesome visitors who were so repeatedly making their appearance.

On the 15th, therefore, placing himself at the head of his troops, he drove the enemy from Gieshübel to Peterswalde in great disorder. But the only result of the affair in our favour was, the capture or destruction of some five hundred of the enemy's troops, who, with a determined air, took up a position in front of the Hollendorf defiles, at the foot of the ridge which separates Saxony from Bohemia.

On the following day, Napoleon, in spite of, the terrible

weather, resumed his march towards the Hollendorf defile, Marshal St. Cyr at the same time moving from Furstenwalde across the Geyersberg. During the whole of the day the pursuit of the Russian and Prussian troops was energetically continued by our troops, and on arriving towards the close of the day in the environs of Kulm, they found the whole army of Bohemia established in strong positions, upon which it would be difficult to make a successful attack. The numbers of this army since the return of the Austrians amounted to at least one hundred and twenty thousand men, whilst the force accompanying Napoleon was no more than sixty thousand. This being the case, and a frightful storm exposing our soldiers to great sufferings, on the following morning Napoleon recrossed the mountain chain, and bidding a final farewell to the Bohemian plains, took up a position at Pirna, close to the bridge which he had had constructed secretly, so that the enemy might not form any idea of the mass of forces which might within a few hours debouch upon the one or the other bank. He concentrated the whole of his guard on this point, and held himself in readiness to lead forty thousand men to the succour of either Macdonald or St. Cyr. In the meantime, Marshal Macdonald observed somewhat singular movements taking place on the part of the enemy; one portion of their new troops ascending from left to right for the purpose of entering Bohemia by the Zittau débouche, whilst another portion, moving from right to left, quitted Blücher for the purpose of joining Bernadotte. As, however, it appeared that the most important events would probably take place in Macdonald's front, Napoleon considered it advisable to remain in his position at Pirna; for, in case it should be necessary for him to throw himself upon any army that might attack Macdonald, he preferred to cross the Elbe at Pirna or Königstein rather than at Dresden.

But skilful as were all Napoleon's manœuvres, they could not prevent the war from being protracted to a disastrous length, which exhausted his young soldiers, and was wanting in those decisive actions with which Napoleon had been wont to startle France and Europe, and which were now necessary to support the spirit of his army, and to disconcert the ever increasing hate of his enemies. In the meantime, his officers, instead of boldly condemning his inordinate ambition, committed the error of finding fault with his admirable tactics; the idea most generally entertained by his staff being that he should have fallen back upon the line of the Saale, a line which, as we have said, could not have been defended longer than a week, and a retrograde movement upon which would necessarily have involved the general retreat of our forces.

upon the Rhine, and the immediate abandonment of all the pretensions for the maintenance of which he had continued the war, and of which the abandonment, happy as it would have been two months since, was now almost impossible.

In the meantime, the allies resolved to terminate the campaign by a direct encounter with Napoleon; the plan they had pursued of avoiding himself and closing only with his lieutenants having already had the effect of reducing his forces to an amount which was no more than half, and was soon to be no more than one-third of their own. There were some difficulties, however, in the execution of this resolution; for whilst the grand army of Bohemia was disposed to attempt a fresh descent from Bohemia into Saxony, on Napoleon's rear, and to march, as originally proposed, by Commotau and Chemnitz, upon Leipsic, in combination with the army of Silesia, and whilst Blucher and his associates were no less eager than the staff of the army of Bohemia to bring the campaign to an immediate and decisive result, they were too strongly imbued with the love of independent action to be willing to place themselves under the direct authority of this staff. As, however, it was necessary to bring forward some better reason than their mere love of independence in opposition to the plan proposed, they represented, in the first place, that it would be a matter of great difficulty for the army of Silesia to conceal its march so completely from Napoleon as to enable it to ascend into Bohemia, cross the mountains, and proceed at their foot as far as Töplitz, without incurring at his hands some serious blow; and that, in the second place, the news received from the army of the north was far from satisfactory. The Prussian and Russian generals, and especially the Prussian generals, placed under the orders of the Prince of Sweden, complained of his inaction during the battles of Gross-Beeren and Dennewitz, formally accusing him of being guilty of a prudence which was in reality mere madness, or of an infidelity approaching treason. And of these two suppositions the former was the right one, for he trembled to put in jeopardy his undeserved reputation; and at this very moment, when he had before him only Ney's army, now reduced to thirty-six thousand men, he remained under the protection of the cannon of Magdeburg, and was engaged in making pretended preparations for a passage of the Elbe which he had no intention of executing. This being the case, then, Blucher proposed, that instead of displacing the army of Silesia, for the purpose of making it co-operate with that of Bohemia or that of the north, it should be united with the latter, which certainly would never act until it should be in this way constrained to do so. He proposed, then, that instead of proceeding to Bohemia



himself, the army under Benningsen should be sent thither to join Prince Schwarzenberg at Töplitz. When this movement should have been executed, his own troops would, he further proposed, execute a feigned attack upon the entrenched camp at Dresden; and then, having left some cavalry troops to deceive the French, descend sixty thousand strong upon the Lower Elbe, to force Bernadotte to cross this river in the neighbourhood of Wittenberg, and to ascend with him the course of the Mulde as far as Leipsic, at the head of one hundred and twenty thousand or one hundred and thirty thousand men, whilst the Prince of Schwarzenberg, reinforced by Benningsen, should descend to the same point with a force of more than two hundred thousand. By this plan three hundred and twenty thousand men would be assembled in Napoleon's rear, and the allies would be able to compel him to accept a general engagement, which the superiority of their forces must almost certainly render advantageous to them.

This plan being regarded very justly as superior to that which had been formed in Bohemia, and the intense desire for victory with which the allies were possessed having dominated their feelings of jealousy, it was ultimately adopted, and forthwith carried into execution. General Benningsen penetrated on the 17th into the Zittau gorges, and on the 23rd September arrived at Töplitz. In the meantime, Blücher having secretly informed the Generals Tauenzien and Bulow of his projects, and urged them to keep the French constantly engaged in front at Wittenberg, Torgau, and Grossenhayn, himself executed incessant manœuvres around Dresden, for the purpose of veiling the great movement which he was preparing to carry into effect on his right, in the direction of the Lower Elbe.

The incessant movement of the enemy's troops in our front, the appearance of Thielmann's and Platow's light horse on our right and in our rear, the preparations which were being made in the direction of the Lower Elbe (by which we mean that portion of the Elbe below Torgau), and finally, the advanced period of the season, were signs more than sufficient to lead Napoleon to conclude that events were about to take place of the most important character; and whilst expecting with the utmost eagerness a decisive battle, which he believed could not but be decided in his favour, he held himself constantly on the alert, so as, on the one hand, to avoid being in any way surprised, and on the other, to be ready at the right moment to fall upon the rash individual amongst the hostile leaders who should first venture to risk an aggressive movement on his rear.

On the 22nd September a series of small events strongly

excited his attention. Marshal Marmont, reinforced by the cavalry reserve of General Latour-Maubourg, had been posted, as we have seen, at Grossenhayn, for the purpose of protecting the convoys of provisions which were ascending towards Dresden and the groups of wounded soldiers who were moving down from it, and this precaution had for a time been successful; but suddenly the light cavalry of General Chastel was attacked by the heavy cavalry of General Tauenzien, and vigorously driven back; whilst at the same time General Bulow, who was bombarding Wittenberg, showed signs of being about to throw a bridge across the river in the environs of this place, and whilst, at a somewhat higher point, the Russian general Sacken, who formed Blucher's right in front of the Dresden camp, executed several very apparent manœuvres. Napoleon, immediately hastening to Dresden, directed Macdonald to execute with his three corps a reconnaissance *à fond*, and to push the enemy vigorously upon Harta, or even upon Bautzen, so as to discover whether Blucher were really there or not. He at the same time intimated to Macdonald that he would himself follow in his track with a portion of the guard, prepared to act vigorously against the army of Silesia should it still be in the same position.

A reconnaissance, accordingly, conducted by all the French troops composing Macdonald's army against the various corps forming that of Blucher, was begun on the 22nd of September, and carried on the 23rd as far as Bischofswerda, when Blucher was discovered to be in the same position with the same forces; from which circumstances Napoleon concluded that he had too hastily attributed to his enemies bold designs. At the same time, Blucher employed an utterly useless feint to deceive him, sending to our advanced posts by the bearer of a flag of truce a letter for his son, who was a prisoner of our lines, signed by himself, and dated from Bischofswerda, by which means he hoped the more certainly to convince Napoleon that the dispositions of the allied troops had undergone no change, and would undergo none. It was not this letter, however, to which no one attached the slightest weight, but the more serious circumstance of the presence at Bischofswerda of the three corps forming the army of Silesia, which, without precisely deceiving Napoleon, inclined him to suppose that the execution of the plan which he had discovered to have been adopted by the allies was less imminent than he had originally imagined. The consequence was, that he made the arrangements on which he had already resolved, but made them somewhat less promptly.

Having left before Dresden only the 11th corps, and retained its chief, Marshal Macdonald, from the command of

the 3rd, 5th, and 8th, he sent the 3rd (General Souham's) to Meissen, a little town situated on the Elbe, below Dresden, to which point he also moved Marmont with the 6th corps, and Latour-Maubourg with the heavy cavalry, that they might be ready to support Ney should the enemy attempt to effect the passage of the stream in the direction of Torgau or Wittenberg. At the same time he carried Lauriston's corps (the 5th) to Dresden itself, and marched Poniatowski's (the 8th) along the Waldheim and Leipsic route, for the purpose of assisting Lefebvre-Desnoette against Thielmann's and Platow's light horse, and forming the *tête de colonne* of the army, should it be necessary to fall back on the masses of the enemy coming from Bohemia.

To these measures Napoleon added some others, which prove that he felt a vague presentiment that the war would speedily be waged on the Rhine, or at least on the Saale. In fact, he ordered General Rogniat, who was engineer-in-chief of the grand army since the captivity of General Haxo, to reconstruct the fortifications of Merseburg on the Saale, and to throw bridges across this river, so as to secure for the army a certain line of retreat. At the same time he had the wounded moved in the direction of Mayence; and foreseeing that the war would be both long and desperate, drew up a decree for the levy of twelve thousand men of the *classes antérieur* of 1812, 1811, and 1810, and another for the levy of one hundred and sixty thousand men of the conscription of 1815, which would thus be anticipated two years. That of 1814 was already at the dépôts, and he hoped that when the refractory recruits were brought in, it would amount to three hundred thousand troops, who would be ready for active service in the spring. He drew up with his own hand the address which the empress was to deliver before the Senate on the occasion, and lastly, gave direct orders to the minister of war to put the fortresses of the Rhine, and more especially those of Italy, into a state of defence. But whilst taking those prudent measures, he at the same time countermanded the collection of the vast supplies of provisions which had been ordered by the Duke de Peltre, in accordance with the terms of M. de Bassano's letter, previously cited, lest the populations should be overmuch alarmed by preparations which he considered to be, at present, at least premature.

Whilst Napoleon was thus engaged, the allies executed somewhat earlier than he had expected their double movement upon Leipsic by Bohemia and the Lower Elbe. The Prince of Schwarzenberg, preceded by an Austrian column, marched from Toplitz upon Commotau, and Blücher, after having remained motionless in Napoleon's presence during the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of September, suddenly withdrew, for the purpose of descending

the Elbe from Dresden to Wittenberg, covering his movement by an attack on the advanced posts of Macdonald and Marmont, executed by his right under General Sacken, and leaving before Dresden, for the purpose of still further concealing his operations, Sherbatow's Russian corps and Bubna's light Austrian division, which together formed a body of some eighteen thousand men.

But well calculated as these measures were to deceive even the most experienced eyes, General Blucher's march, concurrent as it was with the other movements of Generals Tauenzien and Bulow, and the Prince of Sweden himself, could not escape the vigilance of Marshal Ney, against whom these various operations were directed. He had seen Bulow construct a bridge at Wartenburg, and maintain his position there during several days; and having also perceived the other corps of the Prince of Sweden's army preparing means of effecting their passage to the opposite bank of the river, either at Barby or Roslau, he had not ventured to take any measures calculated to bring down upon his army of thirty-six thousand men the eighty thousand of the enemy, and had contented himself accordingly with resisting them, more especially at the point where they were preparing to effect the passage of the river near Wartenburg, because it was the nearest to Dresden, and therefore the more diligently to be guarded. He lost no time in writing to Napoleon to inform him of the state of affairs, and to announce to him that the enemy were on the point of effecting a passage of the Elbe between Wittenberg and Magdeburg with a considerable body of troops.

Nor were the events which had taken place on the side of Bohemia less significant. General Lefebvre-Desnoette had proceeded with some thousands of cavalry in pursuit of Thielmann, who, having entered Saxony by a road leading from Carlsbad to Zwickau, had moved in the direction of Weissenfels, as though he purposed to cut off our communications with the Saale. General Lefebvre-Desnoette, after having obtained several successes over the enemy, had ultimately been compelled, by the appearance of Platow with his Cossacks, and five thousand Austrians in his front, to fall back upon Leipsic, with a loss of some hundreds of men. This check, however, had been speedily atoned for by Prince Poniatowski, who, having repassed the Elbe, and fallen back as far as Frohburg with the 8th corps and the 4th of the cavalry, had fallen in his turn upon Thielmann and Platow, and inflicted upon them a loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners of seven hundred men. These various encounters, sometimes resulting in our favour, and sometimes turning against us, were altogether advantageous to us, as serving to keep us thoroughly informed with respect to the

movements of the enemy. And indeed, the information which was now received made it sufficiently evident that on Napoleon's left the army of the north, reinforced probably by Blücher and his troops, was traversing the Lower Elbe, with the intention of ascending towards Leipsic along the Mulde, and that these several armies, after having crossed over to the left of the Elbe, would endeavour to take him in flank.

Declining, then, to be deceived by the enemy's feigned manœuvres, Napoleon forthwith directed his forces on the two points which were being simultaneously threatened in such a manner as to place himself with his reserves between the two allied armies, ready to fall on the one of them which should appear most accessible to his attack. He had already sent Prince Poniatowski in the rear of Dresden, along the Leipsic route by Waldheim and Frohburg, from whence this officer had been able to check the progress of Thielmann and Platow; and he now also moved the 5th corps in the same direction upon Mittweida, for the purpose of affording him support. The 2nd corps, which had been for some time at Freiberg watching the passes leading from Bohemia into Saxony, Napoleon now moved still farther, to the environs of Chemnitz. These three corps, to which were annexed the 4th and 5th cavalry, were to fall back towards Thuringia, along the foot of the Bohemian mountains, taking care to be always between the grand army of the Prince of Schwarzenberg and Leipsic. At the same time, Marshal Marmont was ordered to fall back with the 6th corps and the 1st cavalry upon Leipsic, where he would be only one march distant from Murat, and not more than two from Ney.

As soon as the enemy's movements, which had hitherto been much confused, should manifest some decided plan, Napoleon determined that, leaving St. Cyr and the Count de Lobau at Dresden, he would himself fall back with the forty thousand men of the guard, with Macdonald and Souham, who would join him at Meissen, and going up to the support of either Murat or Ney, as the one or the other of them might appear to be in more immediate danger, raise the army of one of them to a force of one hundred and forty-five thousand men, which would be quite sufficient, he believed, to vanquish first the one and then the other of the two armies of the allies.

The corps of Poniatowski, Lauriston, and Victor, with the 4th and 5th cavalry corps, having been marched in the direction of Mittweida and Frohburg, under the command of Murat, and the corps of Marmont and Latour-Maubourg marched in the direction of Leipsic, Napoleon held himself in readiness at the first signal to proceed either in the one direction or the other with seventy-five thousand men. In the meantime, a column

of battalions and squadrons *de marche* having arrived at Leipsic, he ordered that it should remain there to garrison that city in conjunction with the detachments which General Margaron had already left there, and also ordered thither for the same duty the corps d'Augereau, with which he had at first intended to overcome, as well as to defend, Bavaria, but which now, perceiving that the whole fate of the war was to be decided on the plains of Leipsic, he did not hesitate to summon thither.

In the meantime, the allies proceeded to carry out their plans. Blucher having arrived on the 30th September in front of Wittenberg, replaced Bulow's corps there, and then hastened to make his preparations for effecting the passage of the Elbe. As Wittenberg was still in the hands of the French, he could not hope to be able to cross the river at that point, and therefore proceeded to throw up a bridge across it, somewhat higher up, at Elster, where he succeeded in passing over to the left bank on the 2nd October. But it still remained for him to carry the Wartenburg position, which was by no means an easy task, Bulow having already attempted it, and failed.

Marshal Ney, having learned by means of his reconnaissances the presence of the enemy on the left of the Elbe, lost no time in sending General Bertrand thither to frustrate the objects for which this movement had been attempted. The 4th corps consisted only at this time of the French division Morand, the Italian division Fontanelli, and the Wurtemberg division Franquemont, and numbering altogether no more than twelve thousand men, a very small force with which to contend with sixty thousand enemies, but which was to find compensation for smallness of numbers in advantages of ground, skill, and coolness.

The Elbe as it approaches Elster forms a very decided arc, within which it envelops on its left flank a tract of lone and marshy ground, on which stands the Château de Wartenburg. To protect it against inundations a dyke had been dug, extending in the manner of a cord from one extremity of the arc formed by the Elbe to the other, and on one of the extremities of this dyke is situated the château, the village of Bleddin being on the other. If the enemy's troops, which had crossed the Elbe at Elster, wished to continue their progress in a direct line, they would pursue a course which must lead them to the middle of the dyke. General Morand had consequently posted the French division at this point, where the most difficult task would have to be performed, the Italians being a little to the right, and quite to the right, at the village of Bleddin, the Wurtembergians. Having made these arrangements, and ranged his artillery on the sandy height of the Château de Wartenburg, he awaited the Prussians, who made their appearance on the 3rd, boldly

advancing without any idea of the terrible reception which was in reserve for them. Our troops allowed them to advance to within very short musket range, and then poured upon them from every point of the dyke a sudden and unexpected fire, which completely enveloped and decimated them, and the fire of a murderous artillery being at the same moment added to that of the musketry, they were compelled to give way and to fall back in disorder upon the bridge. Again and again they returned to the charge, and each time were forced to retreat with considerable loss. In vain Blucher had a battery established for the purpose of dismounting our artillery on the Wartenburg height. Our artillerymen, in nowise disconcerted, turned a portion of their pieces against the Prussian battery, and having speedily reduced it to silence, redirected them upon the route, which had now become a fearful scene of carnage.

The contest had lasted for four hours, and nearly five thousand of the enemy were stretched, dead or wounded, on the marshy ground, when at length General Blucher hit upon the idea of directing a vigorous attack on our right, upon the village of Bleddin, which was defended by the Wurtembergians, who numbered only two thousand, and from whom, after a furious assault, he succeeded in taking it. On seeing this, General Bertrand threw the brigade Hullot of the division Morand on the flank of the enemy's column, but it was too late to save the village, in which the enemy had already established themselves, and after having encountered and broken three of their battalions, it was compelled to return behind the dyke, and rejoin the division Morand.

Costing the enemy, as it did, some five or six thousand men, whilst our own loss was at the most no more than five hundred, this brilliant affair may be considered one of the most remarkable of any that occurred during the whole course of our protracted wars; but it could not, nevertheless, Bleddin being taken, prevent the army of Silesia from debouching. It would be necessary, therefore, for General Bertrand to retreat upon Kemberg, for the purpose of rejoining General Reynier and the division Dombrowski, posted along the Mulde, from Düben to Dessau. From prisoners whom we had taken it was learned that the whole army of Silesia had crossed the Elbe, and was on Ney's right, and our reconnaissances informed us that the army of the north had begun to cross the Elbe below Wittenberg, from Roslau to Barby, and was consequently on Ney's left. Let us glance at the features of the country across which these two armies were now advancing for the purpose of effecting a junction, and making a combined movement against the corps of Marshal Ney.

The Elbe, which from Dresden to Wittenberg flows obliquely

from the south-east to the north-west, from Wartenburg to Roslau, and almost as far as Barby, flows from east to west, that is to say, with reference to the position of our troops, from our right to our left. In its course from Wittenberg to Barby the Elbe receives, first, the Mulde, which falls into it in the neighbourhood of Dessau, and then the Saale, which joins it near Barby. Thus Marshal Ney had on his right and in front of him the Elbe, which flowed parallel to his position as far as Wittenberg, and then making a bend passed before him, and on his left the Mulde. He was consequently between Blucher, who had crossed the Elbe on his right at Wartenburg, and Bernadotte, who, having crossed the Elbe below the point of its confluence with the Mulde, was reascending the course of the latter river on his left. He possessed the advantage, it is true, of having all the bridges of the Mulde in his hands, of being able, therefore, to cross to the one or the other of the banks of this river at his will, and of thus covering himself against the advance of either Blucher or Bernadotte. But unfortunately his force consisted of but 40,000 men, whilst Blucher's numbered 60,000, and Bernadotte's even more. The manner in which he manœuvred between those two armies was highly prudent, and was founded on the twofold object of keeping them separate, and of leading his own troops towards Leipsic. In the meantime, Blucher and Bernadotte had an interview, in which they agreed upon a plan of operations, to the effect that as soon as they could leave the banks of the Elbe without danger, they should carry their forces behind the Mulde, and ascend its course as far as Leipsic. But they were, at the same time, equally anxious to provide for a change of fortune against the arms of the allies, by preparing a means of retreat in the shape of reliable *têtes de pont* at Wartenburg and Roslau, the construction of which would occupy at least three or four days.

Whilst these events were taking place between the Elbe and the Mulde, Marshal Marmont, whose instructions authorised him to proceed where the danger might appear to be greatest, had hastened at the first summons from Marshal Ney to leave Leipsic and to descend the Mulde with his *corps d'armée* and Latour-Mauburg's cavalry, and had halted at Eilenburg, behind Marshal Ney, who had fallen back upon Düben.

Murat, entrusted with the duty of watching the gates of Bohemia, advanced with Poniatowski, Lauriston, Victor, and the 4th and 5th cavalry from Mittweida to Frohburg, traversing the foot of the Erzgebirge, and covering Leipsic. The heads of the columns of the army of Bohemia were now plainly visible, debouching in two principal masses from Commotau upon Chemnitz, and from Carlsbad upon Zwickau.



On the morning of the 5th October Napoleon received information of the battle of Wartenburg, and in the course of the same day the detailed account of all the movements effected by the various corps. But the state of things which he now knew to exist neither excited nor disturbed him; for it did but announce to him the imminence of what he ardently desired, a general engagement, and his only fear was that the allies might even now lose their courage and endeavour to retrace their steps. That it was necessary to march upon them there could be no doubt; the only question being as to which of the two masses of the enemy's troops he should first attack, and with respect to this point he did not hesitate a moment. The army of Bohemia was still at a considerable distance from Leipsic; and moreover, Murat, whose force would be raised to 60,000 men by the addition of the 12,000 who were at Leipsic, and the 12,000 of Augereau's corps, would be able to take up successive positions for the purpose of covering Leipsic, and thus gain a few days, during which Napoleon, whom three marches would carry to Düben on the Mulde, would have time to throw himself between Blücher and Bernadotte, and after defeating them one after the other, to march upon the army of Bohemia, vanquishing it in its turn. But should this latter army hasten to re-enter Bohemia, he would decline to pursue it thither, preferring to chase the vanquished troops of Bernadotte and Blücher, following them sword in hand even to Berlin, and thus realise his favourite project of rescuing the garrisons of the fortresses on the Oder and the Vistula, besides transferring, probably, the theatre of the war to the Lower Elbe, where he had the two strong points of support, Magdeburg and Hamburg.

But although Napoleon was full of confidence with respect to the successful result of his plans, he did not fail to admit the possibility that his expectations might be frustrated, and had, therefore, prudently sent General Rogiat to Merseburg to secure a safe retreat to the Saale, upon which river he proposed, should circumstances prove disastrous, to fall back, making it the basis of a new series of operations.

The evacuation by our troops of Dresden and the portion of the Elbe comprised between Königstein and Torgau were evidently necessary incidents of the existing posture of affairs; and accordingly, on the morning of the 6th, Napoleon set out with the whole of his guard, young and old, for the Lower Elbe, directing his march upon Meissen. As the 3rd corps (Souham's) had moved upon Torgau at the first rumour of the battle of Wartenburg, and as Napoleon now ordered Macdonald also to proceed towards Meissen, a force of seventy-five thousand men, formed by the guard and the corps of Souham and

Macdonald, would be in two days close to Ney, and in three in the very presence of the enemy. There still remained at Dresden the corps of the Count de Lobau (the 1st), of Marshal St. Cyr the 14th), reckoning seven divisions, and numbering together some thirty thousand men. Summoning Marshal St. Cyr, who had the command of these two corps, to his presence, Napoleon caused him to feel great satisfaction by the exposition of his views; for he on the present occasion thoroughly entered into the spirit of Napoleon's plans, and had been apprehensive that he should be left behind in Dresden. Napoleon directed him to evacuate in succession Königstein, Lillienstein and Pirna, destroying the bridges which had been established at these various points, and employing a portion of the boats, of which they were composed, in the conveyance of stores and wounded soldiers to Torgau. Whilst executing these measures, the marshal was to take pains to persuade the inhabitants of Dresden that no intention was entertained of abandoning it; but as soon as they should be completed, he was to hold himself in readiness to set out with his thirty thousand troops to join Napoleon at Meissen.

It remained to come to some explanation with the Saxon court, to which Napoleon could only offer the cruel alternative of remaining at Dresden and enduring the chances of a formidable attack by the enemy, or of accompanying our army in its march, and thus being involved in the horrors of such a battle as the world had never yet seen. The good King Frederick Augustus, finding himself in a position in which he could only trust his fortunes with those of Napoleon, preferred to accompany the latter rather than one of his lieutenants, and declared to him his desire to follow him wherever he might go—a decision which imposed upon Napoleon the task of dragging in his train a whole court, consisting of old men, women, and children, who had always been accustomed to the most luxurious and tranquil mode of life, and who displayed all that simplicity and ignorance which characterised the Bourbons of Spain.

Having set in motion a portion of his troops on the 6th of October, and another portion on the 7th, Napoleon set out in person on the latter day, and after a halt of some hours at Meissen pushed on to Seerhausen, on the Wurtzen road. His great experience in warfare had taught him that the most important despatches usually arrived about midnight or one o'clock in the morning, because the generals, who might be posted some ten or fifteen leagues distant, sent off in the evening information of what had taken place during the day. Should the orders required by the state of circumstances disclosed in this information be immediately despatched, they would reach their destination in time to be executed on the following morning; and these

corps, posted at a considerable distance from each other, would act as though under Napoleon's own immediate command. But this could only be the case on the condition that the emperor should be awake and ready at the moment when the orders in question had to be despatched; and accordingly, it was his usual habit during this last campaign to go to rest at about six or seven o'clock in the evening, and rising at midnight to dictate his correspondence during the whole of the night.

Having halted at Seerhausen a short time to snatch a brief repose, Napoleon set out the same night for Wurtzen, where he arrived on the 8th, sufficiently early to despatch his orders for the day. At Wurtzen he was on the Mulde, and in a position from which he could reach either Leipsic or Düben in the same space of time. His intention on quitting Dresden had been to determine at Wurtzen itself upon his final resolution, and from this point either to throw himself upon Leipsic, should Murat be unable any longer to make head against the army of Bohemia, or should Murat be able still to maintain his position for a few days, to descend the Mulde as far as Düben, and free himself from the armies of Silesia and the north by driving them beyond the Elbe. All the information he had received en route concurred in showing that the greatest danger threatened in the direction of Ney, and an unfortunate misunderstanding which had arisen between this marshal and Marmont was an additional reason for his presence in that quarter. The misunderstanding alluded to had arisen from the following circumstances. Ney having fallen back after the battle of Wartenburg as far as Düben, and having urged Marmont to come to his assistance, which the latter had done by advancing to Eilenburg, had suddenly quitted his position, and passed behind Marmont for the purpose of approaching the Elbe in the direction of Torgau. By this proceeding Marmont was driven from his position *en appui* into one in which he was *en tête*, and gravely compromised; Leipsic being at the same time exposed by the movement which Ney had required him to make to any enterprise that Bernadotte and Blücher might undertake against it. Marshal Ney had been induced to take this extraordinary step by his desire to reinforce his army by the 3rd corps (Souham's), which he had long commanded, and on which he had placed great reliance. Marmont, however, not knowing what to think of Ney's conduct, and fearing for the safety of Leipsic, had in his turn fallen back as far as Taucha.

Having formed his plan of action without loss of time, Napoleon resolved to march from Wurtzen upon Eilenburg; in other words, to descend the Mulde with the seventy-five thousand men he brought with him, pushing forward Ney and Marmont in advance, with the hope of being able to overtake

Bernadotte and Blucher before they should have time to repass the Elbe. As soon as Blucher and Bernadotte should have been vanquished, he proposed to turn back upon the Prince of Schwarzenberg, should he have continued to advance with the army of Bohemia, or should he have retreated at the news of a disaster to the arms of the allies, to continue to pursue Blucher and Bernadotte as far perhaps as Berlin itself.

Having ordered, in pursuance of this plan, Ney and Marmont to advance, the former by the right bank, and the latter by the left bank of the Mulde, Napoleon followed them with the whole of his guard and Macdonald. At the same time, he communicated to Murat the measures he had projected against the united armies of the north and of Silesia, and directed him, whilst avoiding any collision with the enemy, to keep constantly between him and Leipsic, where he would find a reinforcement of twenty or four and twenty thousand men, which would raise the force under his command to some sixty and odd thousand combatants. Napoleon had, in fact, posted the Duke of Padua at Leipsic, with a portion of the 3rd cavalry corps (detached from Ney's army, for the purpose of pursuing the Partisans), together with some *bataillons de marche* which had arrived from Mayence, and the old division Margaron. These troops, when joined by those under Augereau, which were on their march towards them, would form a force of twenty-four thousand men; and Napoleon gave orders that they should keep an active watch, especially on the side of the Lower Elbe, against any attack which Bernadotte might possibly make upon Leipsic. Unfortunately, added to these judicious orders was one which, although quite justified by the state of circumstances at the time, cannot but be much regretted. By this order he countermanded, or rather deferred the evacuation of Dresden, for which Marshal St. Cyr had made every preparation; the reason being, that he believed that a decisive battle was imminent, and that he desired to be able, after the victory which he did not doubt he was about to gain, to make Dresden once more his headquarters.

Having passed at Wurtzen the evening of the 8th and the whole of the 9th for the purpose of affording time for the arrival of his troops in line, Napoleon set out before daybreak on the 10th for Eilenburg, where he arrived about four o'clock in the morning. Placing himself at the head of the light cavalry of the guard, he marched upon Düben, in the midst of his troops, which were arranged in the following order. Ney occupied the foremost place with what remained of the Duke of Padua's cavalry and Sebastiani's corps, having Reynier on the left beyond the Mulde, whilst Dombrowski and Souham were in the centre on the Mulde itself, and Bertrand marched on the

right at an almost equal distance from the Mulde and the Elbe. Napoleon followed with the cavalry of the guard and that of Latour-Maubourg *en tête*, the troops under Marmont forming the left on one side of the Mulde, the whole of the guard forming the centre on the Mulde itself, and Macdonald's troops forming the right between the Mulde and the Elbe. At two days' march in the rear followed the grand *quartier-général* with all the baggage, artillery, and munitions of war, and with the worthy princes of the Saxon court, who journeyed in a fashion corresponding to the habits of their lives. In the meantime, the enemy were perceived falling back in all directions, and yet once more Napoleon had reason to fear that the allies, resuming their old tactics, would evade his onslaught.

Believing that they would have to encounter only Marshals Ney and Marmont, Blucher and the Prince of Sweden had agreed on the 7th to march together upon Leipsic on the 9th. However, secret information reached Bernadotte and Blucher of the approach of Napoleon in person, and the former had thereupon hastened to declare that he would immediately fall back behind the Elbe for the purpose of saving himself from disaster, unless the army of Silesia should join him beyond the Mulde, and thus unite the armies of the north and of Silesia in one single mass. This plan was a prudent one, and Blucher hastened to conform to it, although the proposed movement would involve the inconvenience of forcing him to lose his bridge at Wartenburg. It was then arranged that on the 10th General d'York, whose troops really formed the right of the army of Silesia, should pass the Mulde at Jesnitz, that General Langeron's, which formed the centre, should pass it at Bitterfeld, and finally, that General Sacken's, which had become its left, should pass it at Düben. Thus all the corps of the army of Silesia were in motion defiling before us in a direction from our right to our left along the line described by the Mulde in its course from Düben to Bitterfeld. The corps of General d'York was but a short distance from the point at Jesnitz at which it was to pass the Mulde, and that of Langeron was but four leagues from Bitterfeld; but Sacken, who was at Mokrehna, between the Mulde and the Elbe, had on the contrary a considerable distance to traverse before he could arrive at Düben, and also had to execute this movement in close proximity to the French, a circumstance which rendered it an extremely perilous proceeding.

Whilst Blucher was defiling in a direction from our right to our left for the purpose of crossing the Mulde, Marshal Ney fell upon Langeron's corps, which had remained in the rear for the purpose of awaiting Sacken's corps and delivering up to it the Düben bridge, and driving it back with considerable vehemence.

took from it three hundred baggage waggons. The consequence was that Sacken, who was hotly pressed by the troops of General Bertrand, was compelled to make a great circuit for the purpose of crossing the Mulde at Raguhn.

Napoleon entering Düben about two o'clock in the afternoon, learned from the statements of prisoners that he was in the presence of the whole army of Silesia, and at once resolved to pursue it in every direction; and having ordered his marshals and generals to execute the measures which he considered would have the effect of rendering it impossible for the enemy to effect the passage of the Mulde and the Elbe, he remained at Düben with the guard, Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, and the corps of Marshal Marmont, for the purpose of developing there his ulterior movements.

And now, knowing that the army of the north was on his left behind the Lower Mulde, and that the army of Silesia, after having crossed the Elbe at Wartenburg on our right, was defiling along our front for the purpose of crossing the Mulde on our left and joining the army of the north, and having great reason to suppose that they were about to resume their evasive tactics, and to repass the Elbe at our approach in the neighbourhood either of Acken or Roslau, he resolved to pursue them with the utmost vehemence in the direction of Berlin; and as it was of great consequence that he should possess the power of returning at a subsequent period against the army of Bohemia, he almost instantaneously devised a project as audacious as it was skilful, and which the vast proportions of the forces with which it was to be executed enveloped with an attribute of almost unheard-of grandeur. Napoleon resolved, then, to pursue with the utmost vehemence the armies of Silesia and of the north, passing the Mulde and the Elbe in their track, destroying all the bridges except those which were in our own hands, and ultimately putting these two armies to complete rout. When this should have been accomplished, he would reascend the Elbe by the right bank as far as Torgau or Dresden, and crossing it at one of these points, throw himself upon the army of Bohemia, which having continued to descend the course of the Mulde in pursuit of Murat, would be then taken in a species of trap between the Mulde and the Elbe, the bridges of which would be in our hands.

Napoleon lost no time in giving the orders necessary for the execution of this plan, and gave them in cipher, at the same time desiring all those who became the depositories of his secret to keep it well, declaring that for three days it would be *the secret of the army and the salvation of the empire*. He ordered Murat to act with extreme caution, holding the enemy in check and yet enticing him on, and to fall back upon

Leipsic, where he would meet with the Duke of Padua, and probably Angereau also, to maintain his position there as long as possible, but rather than expose himself to an unequal struggle, to fall back upon Torgau or Wittenberg, where he would find an asylum behind the Elbe. At the same time, he ordered the Duke of Padua to take measures in concert with General Lefebvre-Desnoette for the transfer of all the valuable military stores in Leipsic to Torgau, and directed him to write to Erfurth and Mayence to the effect that the French troops were in full manoeuvre, that the movements in which they were engaged were of a very complicated character, and that no alarm should be felt should news be received of the occupation of Leipsic by the enemy, for that although such an event might very possibly take place, the result of the combinations which were now being carried out would be, as it were, a thunderbolt hurled in our favour.

But attendant on this finely conceived combination there was one inconvenience, and that a very serious one, being the necessity which it involved of refraining from carrying out the proposed evacuation of Dresden; for as one of the main portions of this new plan was that, after having crossed the Elbe in pursuit of Blucher and Bernadotte, Napoleon should recross it for the purpose of surprising the army of Bohemia, and it might possibly be necessary for him in pursuance of this design to ascend it, not only as far as Torgau, but even to Dresden itself, the preservation of this city was absolutely necessary. Napoleon accordingly sent orders to Marshal St. Cyr to maintain his position at Dresden, adding that he would probably reappear in person very shortly under its walls, after having accomplished great designs, and in pursuit of others still greater. But unfortunately, should these designs not be realised, and should our troops be forced to meet the enemy in the position they then occupied between Düben and Leipsic, this new plan with respect to the continued occupation of Dresden would have been the means of depriving us of thirty thousand men, who might have turned a doubtful scale of victory in our favour, and who, should we be obliged, after a defeat or drawn battle, to recross the Saale, would be thirty thousand more troops added to all those which, shut up in the fortresses of the Elbe, the Oder, and the Vistula, could not return to France, and would consequently be compelled to capitulate.

After having formed these vast plans, Napoleon resolved to spend a day or two at Düben, for the purpose of awaiting the arrival of information respecting Murat and the various corps sent in pursuit of Blucher and Bernadotte, since he was desirous of knowing whether he should have to seek the

armies of Silesia and the north behind the Mulde, passing this river between Düben and Dessau, or to seek them beyond the Elbe, passing this river at Wittenberg. The weather was frightful, and Napoleon was forced to await the result of his reconnaissances in a little villa surrounded by floods, and in the midst of woods, which an unpropitious autumn had already smitten with decay. The forced inaction to which he now had to submit he found excessively irksome, and although still very confident in his ultimate success, he could not always resist the invasion of certain vague presentiments. His only resource was conversation with Marshal Marmont, whose equable, open, and cultivated mind pleased him much, and with whom he had formerly been on the familiar terms proper between a general and his aide-de-camp.

On the 11th the reports of his lieutenants announced to Napoleon the following results. General Bertrand had advanced to Wartenburg with the 4th corps, and had set himself to work to destroy the grand *tête de pont* which Blücher had begun to construct there. Generals Dombrowski and Reynier had driven away from the environs of Wittenberg the troops which blockaded that place, and having entered it, debouched upon the right bank of the Elbe, and proceeded in pursuit of the Prussian detachments. Marshal Macdonald had taken up a position at Klemberg, behind Wittenberg, for the purpose of supporting Dombrowski and Reynier; and finally, Ney had approached Dessau, and driven back all the detachments of the enemy's troops upon the right of the Mulde. In the meantime, the statements received from prisoners, and the apparent movements of the enemy, were of a nature to throw Napoleon into a state of the greatest uncertainty. In fact, at Wartenburg on our right, at Wittenberg in our front, and at Dessau on our left, not only had detachments of the enemy been perceived, but even entire corps and immense convoys; rendering it quite impossible for our generals to decide whether the enemy re-passed to the right bank of the Elbe on our approach, or halted behind the Mulde, ready to give us battle as soon as we should venture to cross the river in his presence. It might also be the case that the armies of the north and of Silesia, united behind the Mulde, reascended the course of this river for the purpose of effecting a junction with the army of Bohemia in the neighbourhood of Leipsic—a movement on their part which would expose us to the very serious peril of having the whole of the forces of the coalition upon us at the same moment. It was necessary, therefore, that our manœuvres should be conducted in such a manner as to keep us always between the forces of Bernadotte and Blücher



and those of the Prince of Schwarzenberg; in other words, between the mass of the enemy's troops which was ascending from the Lower Elbe, and that which was descending from Bohemia. Having this object in view accordingly, Napoleon sent Marmont, to whose troops he added a strong cavalry division, to the left of the Mulde, towards Dolitzsch, where he would be behind a detached arm of the Mulde, which flows from Leipsic to Jesnitz, and from whence, should he find that the army of Silesia or that of the north were moving in the direction of Leipsic, he might easily march thither himself in a few hours, and arrive there before them.

Having taken this wise precaution, Napoleon proceeded to carry out the measures necessary to enable him to develop his grand design, should it be the case, as he hoped, that the fear of a movement by Blucher and Bernadotte upon Leipsic was but a chimera. Ordering Dombrowski and Reynier to descend along the right bank of the Elbe, for the purpose of destroying all the bridges Bernadotte might hold on that river from Roslau to Barby, and ordering Ney to seize the bridges of the Mulde at Dessau, he left Macdonald at Klemberg to give such support to Reynier and Dombrowski as they might require, and Bertrand at Wartenburg to complete the destruction of Blucher's *tête de pont*. Finally, he concentrated the troops of Latour-Maubourg and the guard around Düben, whence they would be ready to follow Ney to Dessau, to fall upon the armies of the north and of Silesia upon the other side of the Mulde, or to proceed in the direction already taken by Marmont. And this was the manner in which—struggling with grave perplexities, and plunged in profound calculations—Napoleon passed a day many of his critics have declared him to have lost.

Rising, as was his custom, somewhat before one o'clock on the morning of the 12th, he hastened to make himself master of the information that had come in from all directions, and found that whilst one of the two armies of the Lower Elbe, that of Bernadotte, had repassed to the right bank of the Elbe, the other, Blucher's, had remained on the left bank, and displayed a tendency to reascend towards Leipsic behind the Mulde. Another piece of information, to the effect that Murat had engaged the enemy with success on the 10th, tended to confirm Napoleon in the resolution to throw himself at once upon the armies of the north and of Silesia.

The engagement just alluded to, in which Murat had been victorious over Wittgenstein on the 10th, had taken place in the following manner. Murat having advanced with Poniatowski, Lauriston, Victor, and the 4th and 5th cavalry upon Frohburg, had succeeded in intercepting the route leading to

Leipsic by Commoteau and Chemnitz, but had not been in time to intercept that leading to this city by Carlsbad and Zwickau. The consequence had been that Wittgenstein had been able to occupy Borna. Being unwilling to remain in this position, and especially anxious that the head of one of the two columns of the enemy should not reach Leipsic before him, the French marshal had resolutely fallen back on his right, and attacking Borna with the utmost vigour, had retaken it at the point of the bayonet. This engagement, which cost Wittgenstein some three or four thousand men, had rendered us masters of the Leipsic route, and replaced Murat in that position in which it was his task to cover Leipsic against the two columns of Prince Schwarzenberg debouching from Bohemia. Murat, judging from first appearances, in his despatches to Napoleon expressed his belief that the army of Bohemia was in retreat, and urged him to neglect no opportunity of engaging the armies of Silesia and the north.

These details, which Napoleon received on the morning of the 12th, induced him once more to suppose that the allies were anxious to avoid him, and that it was consequently necessary that he should at once throw himself upon the armies of Silesia and the north, pursue them beyond the Elbe, and then, ascending the course of this river by its right bank, surprise the army of Bohemia by suddenly passing over to its left bank. But at ten o'clock in the morning the aspect of affairs had suddenly changed; a second letter from Murat bringing information that instead of being in retreat, the enemy was in full march upon Leipsic; that the Austrian column, continuing its movement by the Chemnitz route, continued to advance upon Frohburg and Borna; and that Wittgenstein's column, after having fallen back for a moment on the Zwickau route as far as Altenburg, had once more boldly resumed its march upon Leipsic. Murat announced that he was himself falling back in the direction of Leipsic, and that he hoped to be able to maintain himself in a good position which he intended to take up some leagues from this city, and in which he promised to devote himself to the ungrateful and perilous task of struggling with a force three or four times superior to his own. At the same moment Marmont's reconnaissance discovered Blucher's army quitting the banks of the Mulde for those of the Saale, and ascending towards Halle, with an evident direction towards Leipsic.

On receiving this information, Napoleon, with the promptitude of a superior military tactician, immediately changed his plans, and resolved to advance immediately upon Leipsic. So long as he had been able to hope that he might succeed in maintaining a position between the two masses of the enemy's

troops which were coming, the one from Bohemia, the other from the Lower Elbe, with the power of throwing himself upon the one or the other at will, his former plan had been in the highest degree skilful and prudent; but now that the tendency of these several masses was evident, whilst he could be neither sure that Murat would be able to hold in check for any time the army of Bohemia, nor that he could himself come up with the armies of Silesia and the north in time to prevent their reaching Leipsic, his chief object was necessarily to oppose the junction of the three armies of the allies, and for that purpose to proceed to Leipsic, to give battle as soon as possible to the army of Bohemia.

Without losing a moment Napoleon made his calculations, and before noon gave the necessary orders for the concentration upon Leipsic of the troops under Marmont from Dolitzsch, of the guard and Latour-Maubourg's troops from Düben, and of those under Bertrand and Macdonald from the environs of Wittenberg. At the same time, as he had reason to suppose that the army of the north had repassed the Elbe, and was anxious to render it harmless by destroying the means by which it might recross this river, he ordered Reynier, Dombrowski, and Sebastiani to complete as soon as possible the operations they had been charged to execute against the bridges of Roslau, Acken, and Barby, and with a similar object in view, reiterated the orders he had given to Marshal Ney to seize those at Dessau.

Napoleon resolved to await at Düben the execution of his orders, for whilst his presence at Leipsic would be of little value until his troops had arrived there, he would be able at Düben to watch the movements of his *corps d'armée*, and the accomplishment of the measures which he had planned for the purpose of keeping Bernadotte at a distance. Certain encounters which took place at this time between Dombrowski and Reynier, who had crossed the Elbe at Wittenberg, and certain bodies of the enemy known to belong to the army of the north, together with the fact that the enemy's troops engaged in the action fought by Ney on the same day at Dessau, and which resulted in our completely routing them with a great loss, were a portion of Tauenzien's corps, which, without absolutely belonging to Bernadotte's army, had usually served with it, confirmed the supposition that the army of the north had remained on the right of the Elbe, for the purpose of covering Berlin, whilst the army of Silesia, having fallen back from the Mulde to the Saale, for the purpose of accomplishing its movement under cover of two rivers, was now moving towards Halle and Leipsic, in order to effect a junction with the army of Bohemia. Such an hypothesis certainly left

many contradictions to be explained, for it was difficult to understand why the armies of Silesia and the north had, at great risk, effected their junction and the passage of the Elbe, only to separate immediately afterwards, and why Blücher had not simply proceeded across Bohemia to effect his junction with the Prince of Schwarzenberg, instead of traversing the immense circuit from Bautzen to Dessau, and from Dessau to Leipsic. But this was not the first occasion on which the generals of the allied forces had appeared to execute strange manoeuvres, and it was impossible not to trust to the unanimous testimonies to the fact of the separation of the two armies of the north and the south.

As these testimonies received fresh confirmation on the 13th by reconnaissances executed in all directions, Napoleon persisted in adhering to the opinion he had already formed, but which, however, was but of little importance with respect to the measures now to be taken, as in any case the speedy and complete concentration of his forces around Leipsic was absolutely necessary. Marmont, with General Deforge's cavalry, had ascended the Mulde, between the principal arm and the little arm which passes at Dolitzsch, in a line which was constantly parallel with that pursued by Blücher's troops, which were effecting a similar movement along the Saale, and were directing their march upon Halle, as we upon Leipsic. On the evening of the 13th, Marshal Marmont took up a position in the rear of Leipsic, at Breitenfeld, which was opposite the Halle route, and where he was in a position to prevent Blücher from entering Leipsic. On the same day Murat fell back in good order upon the opposite side of Leipsic, into a position in which he might hold in check the army of Prince Schwarzenberg. Augereau, after having encountered the light troops of Lichtenstein and Thielmann beyond Weissenfels, not far from the plains of Lutzen, and routed them with a loss to them of two thousand men, was now at the entrance into Leipsic, towards Lindenau, and thus formed a fresh obstacle to a junction between Blücher and Schwarzenberg. Thus on the evening of the 13th ninety thousand of our troops were already assembled in the neighbourhood of Leipsic, in such a manner as to keep separate the masses of the enemy.

In the meantime the concentration of our forces was similarly carried out on the Düben route: the guard and Latour-Maubourg having followed Marshal Marmont; whilst Bertrand, Macdonald, and Ney fell back upon Düben, for the purpose of effecting the passage of the Mulde there; and Reynier, Dombrowski, and Sebastiani returned to it towards Wittenberg. The rain, pouring down incessantly, caused the roads to be in the most frightful state, and unfortunately many

of our soldiers, too young to endure such fatigues, loitered in the rear and encumbered the roads. The grand *quartier-général*, composed of the Saxon court, the matériel of the engineers, the artillery, and the pontoon equipages, and comprising at least two thousand vehicles, had followed Napoleon as far as Eilenburg on the Mulde, and was half-way on the road from Leipsic to Torgau. Napoleon had ordered that all the portion of this convoy which belonged to the artillery should be sent on to Leipsic, and that all the rest should be deposited in Torgau. The Saxon court had been left free to choose between Torgau or Leipsic, in other words, between the miseries attending a siege at the former place, or the risks of a battle at the latter. Guided by its instinctive confidence in Napoleon, it had chosen the latter, and thus added a fresh embarrassment to the many which attended our march along these encumbered and broken roads.

On the morning of the 14th, after having superintended during the whole of the night the execution of his orders, Napoleon set out in person for Leipsic. At the moment of his departure a report received from Marshal Ney caused him to entertain doubts with respect to the position taken by the army of the north; for it now no longer appeared on the right of the Elbe, but on the left, behind the Lower Saale, and always careful to avoid any encounter with our troops. It was consequently much below Blücher on the Saale, and much farther than he was from Leipsic. But whilst he ascended towards Halle, that is to say, towards Leipsic, it could follow his movement, although at a distance, and in this case it might very possibly happen that we might have it also upon our own hands, and thus have to encounter three armies instead of two. On receiving this last piece of information Napoleon sent fresh orders to Ney, Reynier, Dombrowski, and Sebastiani, who had the longest road to traverse, recommending to them the utmost expedition in their movements; and then set out in person for Leipsic, which he reached on the evening of the same day (the 14th), and where he took up his abode in a private house, which had been prepared for him in the Reudnitz faubourg, a league and a half on the other side of the city itself, near the position occupied by Murat.

At Leipsic, in the company of Berthier, Murat, and Marmont, and the officers of his household, Napoleon displayed a feeling of thorough confidence, which was not justified by the state of affairs; for whilst he could, at the most, assemble no more than one hundred and ninety thousand troops around Leipsic, it was very probable that the enemy would bring against him from three hundred and twenty to three hundred and fifty thousand. Nor were the political circumstances of the time of

a more reassuring nature. The kingdom of Westphalia had suddenly succumbed at the mere appearance of a troop of Cossacks, which Blucher, after the battle of Gross-Beeren and Dennewitz, had thrown upon Hesse, and which, everywhere favoured by the population, had reached without difficulty the gates of Cassel. Having at his command only a battalion of grenadiers, two regiments of Westphalian cuirassiers, and a handful of French hussars, King Jerome had found himself in a frightful position; but he had nevertheless braved the storm, and sent to the Duke of Valmy, at Mayence, for a reinforcement of three or four thousand French soldiers. In the meantime he ventured to make a sortie with such troops as he had, which was to a certain extent successful, and forced the enemy to fall back. The agitation of the public mind at Cassel speedily rose, however, to a great height, the greater portion of the Westphalian troops deserted, and the Duke of Valmy could not venture in the then serious state of affairs to grant the required reinforcement without a formal order from Napoleon. The result was, that Jerome was compelled to evacuate his capital and to retreat to Coblentz. On the 30th September, Czernicheff entered Cassel, and the kingdom of Westphalia was abolished.

The news of this event was followed by that of another no less disastrous, to the effect that Bavaria was on the point of abandoning us; a rumour even being abroad that she had already signed a treaty of adhesion to the European coalition. It had, however, prepared us for this event by the continual complaints of its court, that its army posted on the banks of the Inn, under General Wrède, could not offer any effectual resistance to the Austrian army, and that unless it received an immediate reinforcement of thirty thousand men, it would be compelled to yield to the injunctions of the allied powers, the spirit of dissatisfaction prevalent amongst its troops, and the unanimous opinion of its people. The departure of Marshal Augereau for Leipsic had been the signal for its defection, and it had signed a treaty of alliance with our enemies. The consequence was, that should we be compelled to retreat, we should have to encounter in our rear an army of thirty thousand Austrians and thirty thousand Bavarians, ready to bar our path. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that we should be victorious at Leipsic, if we would avoid a disaster which, if not more tragic, would nevertheless be more irremediable than that of Moscow.

In the meantime, in spite of the gloomy aspect of affairs, Napoleon maintained his feelings of implicit confidence in his own skill and the courage of his troops, hoping to vanquish Schwarzenberg on the first day, and Blucher on the second, and thus to escape from the species of net in which the allies

were attempting to enclose him. As, however, his infantry were considerably inferior in numbers to that of the enemy, he resolved to range his own in two ranks instead of three, asserting that the third rank was useless either for firing upon the enemy or charging them with the bayonet, and choosing to forget that if useless for these purposes, it was nevertheless highly valuable as a support to the two others, and of supplying the vacancies which might occur in them during an action.

Whilst Napoleon was engaged during the evening in a discussion with Berthier, Murat, and Marmont, and others of his generals, respecting this new method of arranging his troops, his attendants suddenly announced Marshal Augereau, whom he had not yet seen, this marshal having only lately joined headquarters. "Ah! you have come at last, then, my old Augereau," he cried, "but we have been long expecting you!" And then, in a tone which had no trace of bitterness or alarm in it, but was both friendly and sad, he continued, "And so you are no longer the Augereau of Castiglione!" "Nay! I should still be Augereau of Castiglione if you would only give me back the soldiers of Italy!" replied the marshal. And then Napoleon, without being irritated by this repartee, began to complain of the general spirit of despondency which he found prevailing around him, and went on to dilate, but without acrimony, on the faults committed by his brothers. "Why! you yourself," he said at length, addressing Murat, with a frankness of language which only the complete absence of any spirit of ill-will in its tone rendered supportable—"you yourself have been quite ready to abandon me!" Murat eagerly repelled the imputation, adding that he was well aware that he had many enemies who were only too ready to slander him to his brother-in-law. "Tush! tush!" replied Napoleon, in a manner which showed that he either knew or had guessed the truth of the matter; "you have been quite ready to do as Austria has done; but I forgive you. You are good at heart, you have a genuine feeling of friendship for me, and you are a brave man. It is I who have made the mistake in placing you on a throne. If I had been contented to make you a viceroy, as I made Eugène, you would have acted as he has acted; but as a monarch, you have thought more of your own crown than of mine!"

On the following morning Napoleon mounted his horse at an early hour, for the purpose of inspecting the field of battle, which it was absolutely necessary that he should do, since this battlefield, which our courage and misfortunes have immortalised, was of such immense extent that it required to be well known to enable Napoleon to act by means of his orders in those parts of it where he could not be present in person. He

commenced his inspection on the south of Leipsic, in the direction of the position in which Murat had established his troops after falling back before the army of Bohemia.

Flowing a little above Leipsic, rather close to each other, and divided into numerous arms, the rivers Pleisse and Elster form one stream below this city, and turning somewhat to the left, fall into the Saale, which then flows towards the Elbe, in a direction almost parallel with the course of the Mulde. Now the Prince of Schwarzenberg, after debouching from the mountains of Bohemia with the grand army of the allied sovereigns, had reached Leipsic, pursuing his line of march between the Mulde, the Pleisse, and the Elster; whilst Napoleon, on the other hand, having come from the Lower Elbe, had ascended these rivers as far as Leipsic itself. The Prince of Schwarzenberg had his left on the Pleisse and the Elster, and his right on the slightly sloping plains in the environs of Leipsic; Napoleon having his left on these plains, and his right on the two rivers. Occupying a position which rested strongly on and included Leipsic, Napoleon might reasonably hope to keep Blucher and even Bernadotte entirely separated from Schwarzenberg. Blucher, in fact, being unable to pass through Leipsic, which was in our hands, would have to turn either to the right or the left for the purpose of joining the grand army of Bohemia. Now if he turned to his right, he would have to encounter a serious obstacle in the shape of the Pleisse, the Elster, and the Saale, covering with their thousand arms a wooded valley a league in extent, and behind which it was highly probable that he might find a body of French troops; and if, on the other hand, he should endeavour to effect his movement by the left, he would have to encounter on the vast Leipsic plain the French army returning from Düben, and would be exposed to the greatest perils. It would suffice, then, that Napoleon should hold Schwarzenberg in check on the south of Leipsic, and Blucher on the north, to prevent them from effecting a junction; and it was perfectly possible that he might engage and triumph over each singly, especially as Bernadotte was still at a considerable distance, and there was no sign of his immediate arrival. Knowing, as he did, that Schwarzenberg was the nearest, Napoleon wished to engage him in the first place, reserving the encounter with Blucher for the morrow.

The Pleisse and the Elster, sometimes united and sometimes with separate streams, and embracing a large tract of wooded and marshy ground, flowed, as we have said, from Bohemia to Leipsic, that is, from south to north. Napoleon would naturally make them the support of his right, as Charlottenberg of his left; for not only would it be a matter of great difficulty for the



enemy to cross them, but he would also, after having effected this, have to climb a tract of ground of considerable steepness before he could debouch behind our right on the Leipsic plain. In his front Napoleon had a slightly sloping plain on which stood a few villages. A slight depression of ground, extending from Mark-Kleeberg on the Pleisse to Liebert-Wolkwitz, and passing by Wachau, separated our line from that of the enemy, and was a slight obstacle which was to be desperately disputed. On his left, finally, Napoleon had the vast Leipsic plain, studded with large villages, and threaded by a little stream—the Partha—which, rising at some distance from Liebert-Wolkwitz, fell, after numerous windings across one of the faubourgs of Leipsic, into the Pleisse. Napoleon was almost without any species of support on this side; but the presence of his columns arriving from Düben, would hold the enemy in check, and prevent them from venturing upon any attempt in that direction. Murat, having taken up his position on the south, had posted Poniatowski at Mark-Kleeberg on the Pleisse, Victor at Wachau, Lauriston at Liebert-Wolkwitz, and in the intervals between these several positions the 4th cavalry (Polish cavalry), and the 5th, under Pajol.

On the other side of this species of valley were observed Kleist and Wittgenstein, between Gross-Pössnau, Guldengossa, and Crübern, with the Russian and Prussian guards as a reserve; the Austrian army being partly on our right, between the Pleisse and the Elster, in the angle formed by these rivers, and partly on our left, in front of a wood named University, opposite Liebert-Wolkwitz.

Thoroughly approving of the position taken up by Murat, Napoleon resolved to dispute energetically the line of depressed ground extending from Liebert-Wolkwitz to Wachau and Mark-Kleeberg, and with that object to double Murat's three corps, placing Augereau on the right near Mark-Kleeberg, the guard and cavalry of Latour-Maubourg at the centre at Wachau, and Macdonald with Sebastiani's cavalry on the left beyond Liebert-Wolkwitz. At the same time, as the Austrians in their position between the Pleisse and the Elster threatened the Dölitz bridge, Napoleon, that he might not be turned by his right, posted there the brigade Lefol, taken from the troops which formed the Leipsic garrison. At this moment the corps of Lauriston, Victor, Poniatowski, and Pajol amounted to some thirty-eight thousand men, the troops under Augereau and Lefol to twelve thousand, the guard to thirty-six thousand, Latour-Maubourg's troops to six thousand, and those of Macdonald and Sebastiani to twenty-two thousand, the whole forming a force of about one hundred and fourteen or one hundred and fifteen thousand men, opposed to a force of one hundred and sixty thousand. Napoleon hoped,

however, that some of the corps which remained in the rear under Ney might be made available so as to procure Macdonald a reinforcement of from twenty to thirty thousand men.

Having completed his inspection of the ground, and determined upon his arrangements, Napoleon returned by the left to the Rendwitz faubourg along the bank of the Partha. It was not sufficient, however, that he should have prepared to resist the grand army of Bohemia; for it was necessary to make arrangements also for meeting Blucher, who might at any moment appear on the north of Leipsic. Fortunately there was on this side, beyond the Partha, a very advantageous position, which, extending from the village of Möckern to that of Enteritzsch, stretched across the route from Halle to Leipsic, and presented a large and elevated breadth of ground, resting on one side on the Pleisse and the Elster, and on the other on a great ravine. Should our troops be compelled to abandon this position, they would be able to fall back behind the Partha, and to take up a position resting on Leipsic, in front of the Halle faubourg.

It was there that Marmont, who had constantly watched Blucher during the march of our troops, had established himself for the purpose of engaging him, should circumstances render it necessary. Napoleon approved of the position he had taken, and recommended him to retain it. Ney, with Bertrand, Souham, Reynier, and Dombrowski, whose march was retarded by the destruction of the bridges of the Mulde and the Elbe, would establish himself on Marmont's right, and as his troops should arrive would fall back round Leipsic, from north to south, and effect a junction across the plain watered by the Partha with Murat's left. When these troops should have arrived, the circle formed by our soldiers around Leipsic would be complete.

For the defence of Leipsic itself and the great Rhine route which, entering the Lutzen plain by Lindenau, passes through Weissenfels, Erfurth, and Mayence, and which it was absolutely necessary that we should guard, as it was our only line of retreat, and as, by occupying it, we prevented Blucher and Schwarzenberg from communicating with each other beyond the Elster and the Pleisse, Napoleon left the division Margaron in Leipsic, with orders to defend the Pleisse and the Elster, and the great Bourg de Lindenau, which is the point at which the Rhine route enters the Lutzen plain. At the same time Napoleon directed General Bertrand, who had marched with Macdonald, and now entered Leipsic, to hold himself in readiness to assist either Margaron in the defence of Leipsic and the Lindenau débouché, or Marmont in the defence of the Möckern position.

In the meantime the allies had not remained idle, having made great efforts to concentrate their troops under the walls of Leipsic. Blucher and Bernadotte had, as we have already observed, fled, at Napoleon's approach, behind the Mulde, and been engaged, since their junction, in incessant disputes with respect to the conduct to be pursued. In the first place, Bernadotte was anxious that the army of Silesia should take up a position above him on the Mulde—in other words, place itself between him and Leipsic, so that he might, in case of a reverse, be able the more speedily and securely to retreat towards the Elbe; whilst Blucher, on the other hand, divining Bernadotte's motives, would have wished to see him in such a position between himself and Leipsic that he would be forced to march upon the enemy. As Bernadotte, however, absolutely refused to consent to such an arrangement, on pretence of anxiety to maintain communications with Sweden, Blucher was forced to yield for the purpose of avoiding a rupture. After this dispute another had arisen in consequence of Bernadotte's desire that the allied troops should pursue their march upon Leipsic, not only behind the Mulde, but also behind the Saale, so that there might be two rivers between himself and the French; whilst Blucher, on the contrary, wished to conduct his march by the shortest route, which was covered by the Mulde only. And on this point also the Prussian general had ultimately yielded, but with characteristic impatience had carried only one of his corps behind the Saale, marching at the head of the two others beyond this river, on the Halle road, close to Marshal Marmont. Finally, a third dispute had arisen between the two leaders of the armies of Silesia and the north, and raised the misunderstanding between them to its height. At the sight of the French engaged beyond the Elbe in the destruction of the bridges, Bernadotte, believing that Napoleon was about to march upon Berlin, had being anxious to repass the Elbe, so as to secure himself from being cut off from the north of Germany, which was his base of operations. His whole staff, a great portion of which consisted of Russian and Prussian officers, had, contrary to its usual custom, inclined to his opinion. He had consequently made use of the ultimate authority with which he was invested with respect to the army of Silesia, to command Blucher to follow him on the right bank of the Elbe. On receiving this order, Blucher denied that Napoleon was making a movement upon Berlin, and had not only formally declined to obey it, but had also recommended the Prussian and Russian officers connected with Bernadotte's army to refrain from quitting the left bank of the Elbe. But a fact which was entirely independent of the will of either of the disputants—the destruction of the bridges by Ney and Reynier—put an

end to the debate, Bernadotte being compelled, by the loss of the means of effecting the passage of the river, to remain on the left bank. However, the divisions Thumen and Hirochfeld—Tauenzien's corps—had remained on the opposite bank, and had thus caused Napoleon erroneously to suppose that the whole of the army of the north was resolved to maintain its position on the right of the Elbe and on the route to Berlin.

On the 15th, Blücher was on the Halle route, four or five leagues to the north of Leipsic, and vehemently urging Bernadotte to join him, that at the head of one hundred and twenty thousand men they might safely effect a junction with the Prince of Schwarzenberg.

In the meantime, the army of Bohemia, having for its definite object to descend upon Leipsic, and to effect a junction there with the two armies of Silesia and the north before Napoleon should have time to overwhelm them, had arrived on the 14th before Liebert-Wolkwitz and Wachau, where it had lost twelve hundred men in a cavalry engagement which it had imprudently ventured upon with Murat.

The 15th was employed in rallying and placing the troops in line, and in deliberating upon the plan of attack. That Napoleon was to be immediately attacked was unanimously taken for granted; but with respect to the manner in which the attack was to be conducted great difference of opinion prevailed between the Austrian generals on the one side, and the Russian and Prussian generals on the other; for whilst the latter, who had debouched directly upon Liebert-Wolkwitz, Wachau, and Mark-Kleeberg, in front of Murat, and on the right bank of the Pleisse and the Elster, wished that the attack should be directed upon this point with almost the whole of the allied forces, the Austrians, on the contrary, whilst consenting that a vigorous attack should be made upon Liebert-Wolkwitz, Wachau, and Mark-Kleeberg, demanded that the bulk of the troops should be thrown into the angle formed by the Pleisse and the Elster, and should attempt to gain possession of the Dölitz bridge. Great difficulties would doubtless, they said, have to be encountered in the execution of this plan, but when these should have been surmounted, it would lead them to the rear of the French, and not only render the position of the latter untenable, but also render it almost impossible for them to retire in safety upon Leipsic. But whilst there were certainly several reasons in favour of this plan, there were two great objections to it—the first being that Napoleon would be able with a comparatively small force to check the advance of a very considerable one in the position at Dölitz; and the second, that when he should perceive how weak was the body of troops charged with the attack upon him in front, he would

not fail to throw back his left upon it, and drive it into the Pleisse.

It does not always follow, however, that a plan is renounced because there are excellent reasons against it. The various proposals made were vehemently disputed, and at length the usual course was adopted of a compromise which, beneficial as it may be in matters of policy, is generally very dangerous in those of war. The result was, that it was agreed that the Austrian corps under Giulay, reinforced by the light troops of Lichtenstein and Thielmann, should advance upon Lindenau for the purpose of seizing the French communications with Lutzen, that is, in fact, with Mayence; whilst the bulk of the Austrian army, numbering about forty thousand men, should plunge into the angle formed by the Pleisse and the Elster, and attempt to debouch by Dölitz upon the rear of the French. On the right of the two rivers, on the right of the French, in front of the Mark-Kleeberg, Wachau, and Liebert-Wolkwitz positions, the Prussian and Russian armies, supported by the whole of their reserves, and amounting altogether to a force of about seventy thousand men, would at the same time throw themselves upon the line occupied by Napoleon, whilst the Austrian general Klenau, at the head of some twenty-five thousand men, including a Prussian brigade and Platow's cavalry, would attempt to turn our left beyond Liebert-Wolkwitz on the Leipsic plain, and to effect communications with the armies of Blucher and Bernadotte.

Such was the plan adopted on the evening of the 15th for execution on the following morning; and the 16th of October was accordingly the day selected by the allies for the great and terrible struggle, on the issue of which depended the empire of the world. Napoleon had already posted his troops in their several positions. Macdonald and Sebastiani having arrived, he had directed them upon Holzhausen, to the left of Liebert-Wolkwitz, in order to check the Austrian general Klenau. As Blucher had not yet appeared on the Halle route, Napoleon supposed that he would probably not be present on the 16th, and moved Marmont, therefore, from his position on the north of Leipsic to one in the rear of the grand army, for the purpose of taking part in the decisive manœuvre against Schwarzenberg's right, by which he hoped to secure the victory. Ney he ordered to take the place left vacant by Marmont, and to be ready, in concert with Bertrand, to hold in check anybody of the enemy's forces which might appear to the north of Leipsic. Having given these orders, he took up his own position in the midst of his guard, on horseback, on some rising at the Bergerie de Meusdorf, which commanded a view of battle, and where he had Liebert-Wolkwitz on his

left, Wachau in the centre, and Mark-Kleeberg to the right. The enemy before him numbered some one hundred and sixty thousand men, and to meet them he had at his immediate disposal, including the troops under Macdonald and Sebastiani, about a hundred and fifteen thousand; the remainder of the French army being two leagues in the rear, to be ready for any eventualities which might present themselves in other directions.

At nine o'clock in the morning three cannon reports from the line of the allies were the signal for the commencement of a cannonade of the most terrible description. From Mark-Kleeberg to Liebert-Wolkwitz the troops of the allies advanced upon our line in three strong columns, preceded by two hundred pieces of cannon. On our right, General Kleist, with the Prussian division of the Prince Augustus of Prussia, several Russian battalions, and Levachoff's cuirassiers, marched by Cröbern and Crostewitz upon Mark-Kleeberg. In the centre, Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, with the Russian division which had been confided to him, and the Prussian division of General Klenau, marched upon Wachau. On our left (the right of the allies), Prince Gortschakoff, with his own corps and the Prussian division Pirch, marched upon Liebert-Wolkwitz, whilst Klenau, with a fourth column, was attempting to turn by Seyffertshayn. Our artillery, which was very numerous and most advantageously posted, covered these advancing columns with projectiles; but the attempt to check their progress was in vain, and they arrived unbroken at the foot of our positions.

Kleist's column, which was directed upon Mark-Kleeberg, and numbered at least eighteen thousand men, was speedily engaged with the troops under Poniatowski, which did not amount to more than eight or nine thousand, and compelled them to retire from Mark-Kleeberg to some rising ground at the extremity of our line. Upon this Augereau was immediately advanced to Poniatowski's support, and a heavy fire of artillery was directed against Kleist, who was endeavouring to climb the position upon which he had retreated. In the meantime Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, with his Russian infantry and the division Klenau, was attempting in vain to enter Wachau, which was obstinately defended by Marshal Victor; whilst on our left, Gortschakoff, who had set out from Störmthal, a point more remote than those from which the other columns had started, was still at some distance from Liebert-Wolkwitz, which Klenau was preparing to outflank with his Austrians.

In the meantime, the cannonade from either line was of so furious a description, that none who witnessed it, even amongst the old generals, remembered to have seen any at all resembling it, and that Napoleon, although occupying a position somewhat

in the rear of the *Bergerie de Meusdorf*, was surrounded by killed and wounded officers and their horses. With his usual confidence in himself he remained calm, and permitted the opposed forces to become thoroughly engaged before taking any decisive resolution. As, however, *Poniatowski's* retirement from *Mark-Kleeberg* had caused our line to be thrown back somewhat on the right, he ordered that the 4th and 5th cavalry corps should advance to check *Kleist's* infantry on the slope which they were then in the act of ascending.

General *Kellermann*, who was this day in command of the 4th and 5th corps, threw himself, accordingly, on the infantry of *Prince Augustus*, and checked its advance; but was himself immediately encountered and driven back by *Levachoff's* cuirassiers, which, having crossed the ravine at the foot of our positions, took him in flank. As the latter were in their turn met by a plunging fire which compelled them to fall back, the result was that things remained in this portion of the field of battle in an undecided state, the Prussians gaining no more ground than what they had obtained at first, and we being unable to recover *Mark-Kleeberg*.

In the centre, at *Wachau*, and on the left, at *Liebert-Wolkwitz*, the combat continued to be both obstinate and bloody, the former village being taken and retaken five times in the space of five hours, whilst at the latter, *Lauriston*, who had been attacked in front by *Gortschakoff*, and on the left by *Klenau*, had received them in such a manner as to render them by no means anxious to return.

By noon eighteen thousand men of the two armies had fallen on the field of battle, but two-thirds of this number belonged to the ranks of the allies, and our line remained unbroken, and apparently proof against any assaults, except on the right, where, as we have said, it had been thrown slightly back.

And now the roar of artillery and the information brought by aides-de-camp informed *Napoleon* that on the right of *Leipsic* *Margaron* had been attacked at *Lindenau* by *Giulay*, who was desirous of cutting off our communications with *Lutzen*, and that in the rear, or to the north of *Leipsic*, *Marmont* was engaged with *Blucher*, who had hastened from *Halle* for the purpose of taking part in the battle. Fortunately *Marshal Ney* came up at this moment with the division *Dombrowski* and *Souham's* corps, and *Napoleon* sent him orders, that whilst aiding *Marmont* to the utmost of his power, he was to send behind *Macdonald*, to the support of the grand army, those of his divisions which he could devote to this purpose.

The battle having become at noon more fully developed, *Napoleon* resolved to exchange the defensive for the offensive, and to make his troops debouch simultaneously from *Liebert-*

Wolkwitz and Wachau, for the purpose of crushing the enemy's centre, whilst at the extreme left, Macdonald, debouching from Holzhausen beyond Liebert-Wolkwitz, would in the first place drive back Klenau, and then, falling back from left to right, precipitate himself on the enemy's centre, already attacked in front from Liebert-Wolkwitz and Wachau. For the execution of this movement Napoleon made two divisions of the young guard descend from the one side under Mortier, for the purpose of co-operating with Lauriston's troops in their attack on Gortschakoff, and two other divisions of this same young guard from the other side, under Oudinot, that they might throw themselves, together with Victor's troops, on Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg. Between these two columns as they advanced was the formidable battery of the guard directed by Druot, thirty-two pieces of which (twelve pounders) were under the command of the brave Colonel Griois.

On the one side, then, Marshal Mortier, preceded by the division Maison, descended from Liebert-Wolkwitz, attacked Gortschakoff, and drove him back between the University wood and the marsh-surrounded village of Gùlden-Gossa; whilst on the other side, Oudinot and Victor, debouching from Wachau, repulsed Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, and forcing him to repass the species of valley which separated the two lines, drove him back upon the *Bergérie d'Avenhayn*, which was situated on the right of the village of Gùlden-Gossa. In the meantime, Macdonald making a movement on the left, beyond Liebert-Wolkwitz, attacked Klenau, and forced him to fall back to a considerable distance, driving one portion of his troops upon Klein-Pössnau, and the other upon the University wood; from whence, had Macdonald been aided by a reserve moving up from left to right, they might have been driven on the one side upon Gortschakoff, and on the other upon the Prince of Wurtemberg and Kleist, and altogether into the Pleisse. But Marmont was at this moment engaged with Blucher, and Margaron with Giulay; whilst Bertrand remained in reserve between the two, ready to succour the one of them who might appear to be the most hardly pressed. Ney did not dare to dispose of Souham, so long as Marmont should appear to be seriously attacked, and leaving Dombrowski on Marmont's right, to make head against the masses of the enemy which were perceived in the distance, awaited the approach of Reynier, who had not yet come up.

The enemy having been already driven from the greater portion of the battlefield, were now disputing its extreme limits foot by foot, the allied sovereigns being thrown into a state of the greatest perplexity by the ominous aspect of affairs. M. de Walzogen and General Jomini had already



been sent to the Prince of Schwarzenberg, to entreat him to renounce his movement of attack between the Pleisse and the Elster, and to direct his attention rather to the position of the Prussian and Russian armies between Liebert-Wolkwitz and Wachau; and the prince, yielding to the urgent solicitations of the two generals, and perceiving the difficulty which would attend the taking of the Dölitz bridge, consented to move to the right bank of the Pleisse the reserve of the Prince of Hesse Homburg, numbering twenty thousand men. But this reinforcement could not possibly arrive before three o'clock in the afternoon, and in the meantime, therefore, the allied sovereigns determined to bring into action the whole of their reserves, throwing the Russian cuirassiers upon our infantry, whilst they carried one column of Rajeffsky's ten thousand grenadiers upon Gilden-Gossa, and the other upon the Bergerie d'Avenhayn.

Lauriston and Mortier on our left, in the direction of Gilden-Gossa, and Victor and Oudinot on our right, towards the Bergerie d'Avenhayn, received the Russian cuirassiers in square, and with a steady fire which cast them headlong upon the dead bodies of their horses. Rajeffsky's ten thousand grenadiers in the meantime ranged themselves as a long wall between the Bergerie d'Avenhayn and Gilden-Gossa, whereupon Druot, who had remained between the two columns of attack with his formidable artillery, determined, neglecting for a moment the enemy's artillery, to direct the whole of his pieces upon this magnificent infantry; and advancing to a position even closer to the enemy than that which he already occupied, he overwhelmed them with a fire before which they fell in whole files at once. When they appeared to have been sufficiently broken, the division Dubreton, detaching itself from Victor's corps on our right, charged the Bergerie d'Avenhayn at the bayonet's point and carried it. At the same time General Maison made a desperate attempt to take Gilden-Gossa. On the left, Macdonald, turning Klenau by Seyffertshayn, had driven back upon Gross-Pössnau the Prussian brigade Ziethen, the Austrian brigades Spleng and Schaffer, and the Austrian division Meyer; but the Swedish redoubt established on the left of Liebert-Wolkwitz had remained inaccessible. Napoleon, who directed his attention to every portion of the field of battle, perceiving the 22nd leger at the foot of the redoubt, inquired what regiment it was, and on being told that it was the 22nd leger, he exclaimed, "That is impossible!—for surely the 22nd leger would not have remained thus exposed to the fire of those guns, but would have at once rushed upon and taken them?" It was not long before the 22nd, led by Colonel Charras, carried this position at the bayonet's point, and thus enabled Macdonald;

by removing the obstacle in his path, to continue his movement on our left as far as the Bois de l'Université.

It was now three o'clock, and the enemy, falling back in every direction, appeared disposed to resign to us the victory which Napoleon was well aware that he must seize, if at all, on this very day. To fail to be victorious now would be to expose himself not only to defeat, but to absolute destruction. He took the course, therefore, of throwing his cavalry upon the enemy's line; moving down Murat on the left between Liebert-Wolkwitz and Wachau, with ten regiments of cuirassiers; and Kellermann on the right, between Wachau and Mark-Kleeberg, with the Polish cavalry, the Spanish dragoons, and the dragoons of the guard under General Letort. At this moment Pajol, who was at the head of the Spanish dragoons, received a terrible shock, which rendered him unable to continue on the field, by the bursting of a shell within his horse's body.

Numbering some twelve thousand troopers, our cavalry advanced in two columns, the one on the left and the other on the right, inspired by the recollection of the victory of Dresden. General Bordessoulle, with his cavaliers, thrown by Murat upon Pahlen's horse, speedily dispersed them, and then poured down upon the grenadiers and Russian guards, who, after having become possessed of Gùlden-Gossa, had deployed in front of this village, and completely routed them, taking twenty-six pieces of cannon. On the right, the Spanish dragoons and those of the guard charged Levachoff's cuirassiers, and obtained over them the most decided success. This first movement having succeeded, it now remained only to make a vigorous advance against the enemy's centre, and to drive, on the right, Kleist and the Prince of Wurtemberg into the Pleisse, and on the left, Gortschakoff upon the Bois de l'Université. But it was now past three o'clock, and there were suddenly perceived heavy masses of hostile troops approaching from the other side of the Pleisse. These troops were the Austrian reserve of Hesse Homburg, and the foremost of them taking Kellermann's troops, somewhat disordered by the ardour of pursuit, in flank, broke and scattered them. The enemy's cavalry were charged in their turn by the brave Letort and the dragoons of the guard, and compelled to fall back; but the result of these encounters was that the movement of our cavalry on the right had been by no means of a decisive character, as much ground being lost by us as gained. In the centre, Murat, after having gained great success, in the expectation of being supported, had committed the fault of sending all his squadrons into action, and of advancing on ground which he had not had the opportunity of reconnoitring. At a distance the village of Gùlden-Gossa had presented the appearance of but a few groups

of foliage; but on reaching it our cavalry found the enemy's infantry posted there, behind positions of great strength, and had been compelled to remain before them under fire. At this juncture the Emperor Alexander consented that the whole of the cavalry not yet sent into action, including the hussars and Cossacks of the imperial guard, should be thrown upon our cuirassiers, who were consequently compelled to fall back, taking with them but six of the twenty-six pieces of cannon which they had so lately taken. In the course of the encounter the brave Latour-Maubourg had his leg carried away by a cannon-ball.

The battle had not been decided, then, by this general movement on the part of our cavalry, although a large portion of the field of battle remained in our possession, and Napoleon resolved to attempt one final effort. He re-formed his columns of attack, ordered Mortier with Lauriston, and Oudinot with Victor, to form their troops in columns, and once more to engage the enemy, and arranged that the ten thousand men of the guard, who were the only reserve now remaining at his disposal, should be ready to advance to their support. But at this moment a great tumult arose on our right, where bodies of the Austrian grenadiers, having crossed the Pleisse, and having advanced to the support of Kleist, at the village of Mark-Kleeberg, had endeavoured to drive back Poniatowski; whilst at the same time a most formidable movement was made upon Dölitz by Austrian troops under General Merfeld. Perceiving the danger of the situation, Napoleon checked the movement of his old guard, and directed the division Curial upon Dölitz; at the same time making Oudinot turn to meet the grenadiers who were pressing Poniatowski, but whom the latter, with the aid of the division Semelé (of Augereau's corps), had already successfully resisted.

As the movement of the division Curial was followed by the most happy results, ending in the capture of General Merfeld himself and two thousand of his troops, Napoleon could not refrain, although it was now five o'clock, and nearly dusk, from once more resolving to attempt a final effort on the enemy's centre. Victor was still at Avenhayn; and it only remained, therefore, to gain possession of Gulden-Gossa. Lauriston, who had maintained his ground under a most terrible fire, had suffered the most enormous losses; but there still remained to him General Maison, who, surrounded by the mere wreck of his division, was nevertheless insatiate of perils until he should have taken Gulden-Gossa, and who had re-entered this fatal village followed by Mortier. His success was on the point of deciding everything in our favour, when Barclay de Tolly, fully appreciating the importance of the danger, threw upon that

point the Prussian division Firch, supported by the Russian guard, and succeeded by a desperate effort in once more driving us out of Gùlden-Gossa. Maison made still another attempt to retake the position; but the darkness of night-fall speedily separated the combatants, and this attempt was the last act of the terrible battle of the 16th, which is known as the battle of Wachau, and at the conclusion of which about twenty thousand of our troops, and thirty thousand of those of the allies, covered the ground either dead or dying.

On the same day two other battles had taken place—the one on the west, the other on the north of Leipsic; the one on our right, at Lindenau, the other in the rear, at Möckern; the former having taken place between General Margaron, at the head of eight or nine thousand troops, and Giulay, who, at the head of some twenty-five thousand, had attempted in vain to drive Margaron from the position he occupied at Lindenau. Nevertheless, the contest would probably have had a different result had not the sight of the division Morand and Bertrand's corps, posted between Lindenau and Leipsic, intimidated the enemy.

The battle which had taken place at Möckern had been of a more serious description. Marshal Blücher, suspecting that a decisive action was about to be fought, and unwilling to leave the Prince of Schwarzenberg to support it alone, had set out, as soon as he had heard the sound of the cannon on the morning of the 16th, by the Halle route, towards the north side of Leipsic; at the same time sending officers to Bernadotte to inform him of his position, and to urge him to come up. As, however, the army of the north could not possibly afford him any assistance on the 16th, he advanced with great caution, fearing, although he could distinctly hear the cannon of the Prince of Schwarzenberg, who was only three leagues distant to the south, that he might have to encounter the larger portion of the French army unaided. The sight of our columns ascending from Düben towards Leipsic had caused him to entertain some fears on the subject, and had led him to take the precaution of placing Langeron in observation on the Dolitzsch route. Between the Dolitzsch and the Halle routes he had posted Sacken's Russian corps, and along the latter, which led direct to the north of Leipsic, he had carried the Prussian corps of General d'York, which, being German and Prussian, was of all his troops the most ardent. The time occupied by these precautions was the cause of his not arriving in sight of Leipsic until eleven o'clock in the morning, when he could perceive nothing of the battle which was raging in the south except the roar of the artillery. He saw before him the corps of Marshal Marmont, numbering some twenty thousand men, which was slowly falling back from Breitenfeld

and Lindenthal upon Leipsic, in accordance with the order which it received in the morning to fall back upon Leipsic, and to traverse that city for the purpose of taking up a position where it might form the reserve of the grand army. This order, however, was conditional, and subordinate to that which might take place on the Halle route; since, should the enemy appear in that direction in force, this order was to be null, and make way for the task of resisting the hostile army under Blücher, a task which Marshal Marmont was thoroughly disposed to perform in its full extent.

The position of Marshal Marmont at this moment was a difficult one, in the first place, because he had no more than twenty thousand troops at his disposal, and because, in the second place, the height on which he had taken up his position, between Möckern and Enteritzsch, had the serious disadvantage of resting on the Rietschke ravine, which, after skirting one side of the position, passed behind it as it proceeded to open into the Pleisse at Gohlis. To obviate this inconvenience Marmont would have been glad to have crossed the Partha; but the want of time prevented him from taking this step, and fortunately so, for it would have confined us too closely around Leipsic, and deprived us of all communications with those of our troops which were still on their march.

In the position of Möckern, then, took place the third battle, which was fought between our troops and those of the allies on the terrible 16th October. Induced, as he was, by the sight of the rearmost troops of Souham, and the park of artillery ascending from Düben towards Leipsic, Blücher had left the whole of Langeron's corps in observation before Breitenfeld, and had marched against Marmont only the corps of General d'York, and a portion of General Sacken's, the whole force numbering about thirty thousand men. Directing his first attack upon the village of Möckern itself, on which rested Marmont's left, and which was occupied by the 2nd marines of the division Lagrange, he succeeded after a desperate struggle in gaining possession of it, only to be almost immediately driven out of it by the 4th marines and the 35th leger, which, executing a furious charge at the bayonet's point, completely broke one of the four divisions of d'York's corps, and retook the village which they had occupied.

Finding that he could gain no advantage at this point, Blücher now threw forward two divisions for the purpose of attacking the sloping plateau on which was posted the division Compans; and the two Prussian divisions had bravely performed the task allotted to them, but had been crushed by the fire poured upon them from our forty-four pieces of artillery, losing almost a third of their number. A cavalry charge would

now have decided the fortune of the day in our favour, and Marmont immediately gave orders for one; but unfortunately the Wurtemberg cavalry was but ill-disposed to our cause, and not only executed it in a manner which rendered it of no effect, but in retiring from it managed to fall in with and break one of our *bataillons de marine*.

The combat had been thus prolonged until the middle of the afternoon, when Blucher, becoming convinced that the bulk of the French army was not, as he feared it might have been, on his left flank, threw Langeron's corps in the direction of Dombrowski, to hold him in check, and bringing up the whole of Sacken's corps, attacked Marmont's line with three Prussian divisions, supported by the whole of Sacken's Russian divisions. Upon this Marmont advanced against the enemy with the division Compans, and a struggle ensued, which proved one of the most murderous of any which took place during the war. Marmont himself received a wound in his hand, a contusion on his shoulder, and lost three of his aides-de-camp. Compans' regiment displayed the most heroic firmness, and made a resistance which, supported as it was by the fire of their formidable artillery, would have been successful, had not a shell which burst in one of our batteries caused a confusion which gave the enemy an opportunity of taking it, whilst at the same moment several thousands of their cavalry, pouring down upon the right of the division, now much thinned by the fire to which it had been exposed, compelled it to give way. The division Friedrichs hastened up to its support, but Möckern, which was the support of our left, being at this moment carried, whilst our right was threatened by Langeron, who threatened to envelop Dombrowski, Marmont considered it more prudent to beat a retreat, which he executed in good order and without misadventure. Dombrowski, who had been succoured by one of Souham's divisions, also fell back in safety, after having had the honour of holding in check at Enteritzsch the whole of Langeron's corps. And thus we had held in check, with twenty-four thousand troops, sixty thousand of the bravest and most determined of our enemies; the battle having cost the latter, even according to their own account, nine or ten thousand men, whilst our loss consisted of about six thousand troops and twenty pieces of cannon, which were lost by reason of the explosion above alluded to.

Such was this terrible battle of the 16th, which, consisting in reality of three distinct engagements, cost us about twenty-six or twenty-seven thousand men, and the enemy about forty thousand—a sad and cruel sacrifice, which covered our army with immortal honour, but at the same time covered with a cloud of sorrow our unhappy country, whose best

blood flowed in torrents to secure, not its greatness, but its ruin.

Although we had had the advantage at every point, as the result of the battle had not been to drive Schwarzenberg and Blucher any considerable distance apart, it might speedily be followed by a disaster; for whilst Bernadotte was coming up with sixty thousand troops, and Benningsen with fifty thousand more, our only accession of strength consisted in fifteen thousand, of whom two-thirds were ready to betray us. As soon, in fact, as Napoleon had failed to drive the army of Bohemia to a sufficient distance to leave him free to throw himself upon those of Silesia and the north, his position had become one of extreme peril. Nor could Napoleon himself dissemble his consciousness of its gravity, which, however, could only be fully estimated after a close inspection of its absolute details.

On the morning of the 17th, after a few hours' repose, he mounted his horse and proceeded to traverse the field of battle, which even to his eyes, accustomed as they were to terrible spectacles of the kind, presented a frightful aspect. A sullen gloom lowered on every countenance. Murat, Major-General Berthier, and the minister Daru accompanied him. Our soldiers had died at their posts, but so had those of the enemy also, and it was but too evident that another struggle would but result in our maintaining our ground, whilst the allied troops would be surrounding us with an iron circle, from which we might find it impossible to escape. An immediate retreat by the Lutzen route, so as to prevent the closing of the way of egress by Lindenau, was consequently the only resolution which remained to be taken. Napoleon himself, as he traversed the field on foot in the midst of his lieutenants, pronounced the first word in reference to that retreat which no one had dared to propose, and which was welcomed with evident although silent approval. A retreat, however, could not but be attended with serious inconveniences; for, in the first place, although the battle had resulted in the triumph of our arms, its practical signification would depend on our attitude on the following day, for, should we then be in retreat, the battle would have ended in our discomfiture. And in the next place, what was to be done, in case we should retreat, with the hundred and seventy thousand French troops left at Dresden, Torgau, Wittenberg, Magdeburg, Hamburg, Glogau, Custrin, Stettin, and Dantzic, of whom from one hundred to one hundred and twenty thousand were excellent soldiers, ready for active service in the field? Would they concentrate into one mass, and open for themselves a road into France by Hamburg and Wesel? The question was one of grave importance.

To blame Napoleon for having allowed the 17th to pass by

without having decided upon some plan of action, would be but to display but a slight knowledge of the movements of the human heart. To declare himself vanquished in a pitched battle, and to abandon the hundred and seventy thousand French troops left in the fortresses of the north, without some hours devoted to meditation and regrets, would be too much to expect of any one, however exalted his character. There were other reasons, however, for some delay on the 17th, since it would afford time for the arrival of Reynier, who had not yet come up; enable us to say we had remained four and twenty hours in front of the allied armies, and having awaited them in vain, had fallen back upon a more advantageous position; and grant some brief repose to our over-wearied soldiers.

Although it was thus advisable, however, to defer the retreat for a day, it was not the less necessary that every preparation should be made during the 17th for its commencement at night-fall; but unfortunately Napoleon, completely absorbed by the perplexities arising from the difficulty of his position, scarcely gave an order throughout the day, which he passed in a state of gloomy reverie, wandering about, sometimes alone, and sometimes accompanied by Murat, Berthier, and M. Daru, repeating perpetually that a retreat was absolutely necessary, but unable to persuade himself to order it, and indulging in the hope that the enemy, instead of attacking him on the morrow, would act in accordance with the old maxim so much in favour with prudent generals, *to build a bridge of gold for a flying enemy.*

Whilst in this state of mind it occurred to him to have an interview with M. de Merfeld, who had been made prisoner the previous evening at Dölitz, and with whom he had been long intimately acquainted, for the purpose, not only of obtaining some information with respect to the plans of the allies, but also of throwing out in the course of conversation with him certain hints of a pacific tendency. He proposed even to give him his liberty, and to send him into the camp of the allied sovereigns, charged with a proposition for an armistice, which would at least have the effect of causing them to lose a day in deliberations, and might even call forth on their part some acceptable proposal.

Receiving M. de Merfeld very graciously about two o'clock in the afternoon, Napoleon inquired of him whether the allies had known, when they attacked him, that he was himself present on the field; and the general having answered in the affirmative, Napoleon rejoined, "You were resolved, then, this time to give me battle?" M. de Merfeld replied respectfully but firmly, that the allies had indeed been determined to terminate the long-continued struggle by a desperate and decisive battle. After some remarks with respect to the relative numbers of his own



troops and those of the allies, Napoleon inquired with an air of careless good-humour, "And to-morrow, now, shall you attack me?" To which M. de Merfeld replied that there was no doubt that the allies would renew their attack on the morrow, as they were resolved to purchase liberty at the price even of the last drop of their blood. Dissembling the impression made on him by this reply, he gave a new direction to the conversation, saying to M. de Merfeld, "This struggle is becoming very serious; is it to have no end? Are we absolutely determined never to have peace?" "Would to heaven that your majesty were willing to have it!" exclaimed the Austrian general; "it is the only result that we require for our efforts, and would have been attained two months since at Prague, had your majesty been so inclined." Upon this Napoleon had recourse to a series of false excuses, declaring that at Prague the allied powers had not acted with sincerity towards him, that England was averse to a peace, that she had induced Russia and Prussia to adopt her own views, and would prevail upon Austria to do so likewise. If the latter country desired peace, he added, it was for her to secure it. M. de Merfeld, after declaring that he only spoke in his private capacity, maintained in reply that England was sincerely desirous for peace, being in actual need of it, and that were Napoleon but willing to make some sacrifices for the happiness of the world and of France, peace might be forthwith concluded. "Sacrifices," cried Napoleon, "I am quite willing to make; let England restore my colonies, and I will give up Hanover." M. de Merfeld, intimating that this would not be sufficient, Napoleon allowed a word to escape his lips which, had it been pronounced at the Congress of Prague, might have changed both his own fortunes and ours. "I will restore," he said, "if it be necessary, the Hanseatic towns. . . ." But this concession, unfortunately, came too late, and M. de Merfeld plainly expressed his opinion that to obtain peace with England it would be necessary that he should consent to give up Holland. Napoleon loudly exclaimed against this, declaring that Holland would become in the hands of England the means of enabling her to establish a maritime despotism, for England, he was well assured, was anxious to force him to limit the number of his vessels.

The conclusions which Napoleon was able to draw from this interview were to the effect, that whilst two months since he might have obtained peace by the sacrifice only of the Duchy of Warsaw, the Protectorate of the Rhine, and the Hanseatic towns, it would now be necessary for him to resign also Holland, Westphalia, and Italy. But whilst Napoleon appeared to admit that at the conclusion of a general peace it would be requisite for him to make great sacrifices, and manifested more

readiness to make them than he really felt, his thoughts were not, unfortunately, occupied so much with the subject of peace as with the vague hope of obtaining an armistice. "Let us all," he said to M. de Merfeld, "make a retrograde step, the Russians and Prussians to the Elbe, the Austrians to the mountains of Bohemia, the French to the Saale, so as to give a little breathing time to this unfortunate Saxony, and to be able freely to carry on negotiations for peace." M. de Merfeld replied that the allies would certainly decline to accept the Saale as the line to be held by the French troops during an armistice, since they hoped to throw this back as far as the Rhine. Napoleon rejoined that he would never consent, except in case he should lose a battle, to retreat to the Rhine; and then added, "You may go, sir; I set you free on your parole. It is a favour which I grant in consideration of your merits, and of our old intimacy; and if you should think proper to turn our present conversation to the purpose of setting on foot a negotiation, or of procuring at least an armistice, you will find me disposed to listen to your propositions."

At the close of the day new and ominous light was thrown upon our situation. Strong columns of the enemy's troops appeared on the Dresden route, and the ranks of Schwarzenberg's army grew continually more formidable. From the belfry towers of Leipsic Bernadotte's army was plainly seen approaching from the north; and we were almost completely shut in by a circle of hostile arms on the south, the west, and the north. The only issue remaining still open to us was that towards the east, lying across the Leipsic plain. And now, at length, making a final struggle with his own heart, Napoleon resolved to order a retreat. But he adopted this plan, unfortunately, too late, and carried it out too incompletely, in his desire to make a retreat which should almost have the appearance of not being one, and should be executed in the open day. He determined that about two hours after midnight a retrograde and concentric movement should be made upon Leipsic about the distance of a league; that Bertrand with his corps, and Mortier with a portion of the young guard, should proceed by Lindenau to secure the Lutzen route; and that at daybreak the several corps of the army should defile one after the other across Leipsic, energetically repelling any attacks the enemy might venture to make upon them. He believed that he was still sufficiently strong to render the enemy unwilling to attempt to interrupt a retreat conducted in this form.

In the meantime the course of affairs on the side of the allies had been such as by no means coincided with the illusions which Napoleon had indulged in as the means of concealing from himself the extent of his misfortunes. Their

first intention had been to fight with us incessantly, so as to wear us out by the mere force of numbers; and with this view they would naturally have renewed the combat on the 17th, but having received information of the probable immediate arrival of Bernadotte and Benningsen, at the head, respectively, of about sixty thousand and fifty thousand men, they resolved to defer the decisive attack until the following day. The communications brought by M. de Merfeld in the afternoon affected no one, except so far as they plainly revealed the state of difficulty which must have forced Napoleon to make proposals so alien to his inclinations. Never to halt until he should have been driven back to the banks of the Rhine was the universal resolution.

The measures taken by the allies on the north of Leipsic, although carried out with less unanimity, did not the less tend to the accomplishment of their purpose. The Prince of Sweden, yielding at length to the remonstrances which assailed him on every side, had set his troops in motion on the 17th, and taken up a position behind Blücher, of whom he demanded an interview. This interview, however, the latter declined, well knowing that the object of the former was simply to induce him to cross the Partha, for the purpose of completing the circle in which the French army was being enclosed, and thus incurring the risk, which was imminent, of incurring some severe check from the enemy's forces. Weary of yielding to the exactions of an ally of whose fidelity and energy he was very suspicious, he declared that his own troops, exhausted as they were by the engagement of the 16th, were far less fit than those of Bernadotte to maintain a difficult position, and demanded that the latter should himself cross the Partha, on the left of the army of Silesia, and incur the risk of a position on the Leipsic plain, face to face with Napoleon. At the same time, however, he intimated to the Prussian and Russian generals who commanded the several corps of the army of the north his intention of crossing the Partha simultaneously with them on the morrow, the object of his refusal to Bernadotte having simply been to force the latter to take a position in which it would be impossible for him to remain inactive.

In the meantime, Napoleon, recognising the real nature of his position, had resolved towards the evening of the 17th to order a retreat; not such a nocturnal retreat, however, as is authorised by the art of war when it is necessary for an army to withdraw from before an enemy of superior force, but a retreat which was to be conducted in the open day, and in an imposing manner across the long track from Leipsic to Lindenau, which consisted of a multitude of bridges thrown across the arms of the Pleisse and the Elster. At two o'clock in the

morning he was up despatching his orders, which were to the following effect. All the corps which had fought on the south, namely, those of Poniatowski, Augereau, Victor, Lauriston, Macdonald, the guard, and the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th cavalry, would fall back the distance of a league, and form around Leipsic, on the Probstheyda plateau, a compact and almost invincible circle. On the north and east, Marmont, who, after the battle of Möckern, had repassed the Partha, was to concentrate his forces from Schönfeld to Sellerhausen; whilst Marshal Ney, who, with Reynier, arrived on the afternoon of the 17th, formed the prolongation of Marmont's line, would throw back his right until it should meet Macdonald's left across the Lutzen plain, and thus complete the circle which the troops of the French army were to form. On the east and the north, as on the south, our troops would then slowly retrograde, driving back such bodies of the enemy as might press them too closely, and passing through Leipsic by the Chaussée de Lindenau, to open which Napoleon had sent Bertrand beyond Lindenau. General Rogniat was ordered to proceed with the engineers of the guard, to throw fresh bridges across the Saale below Weissenfels. Margaron was entrusted with the defence of Leipsic, and was to establish himself within it; Dombrowski occupying the ground without its walls as far as Schönfeld, where was posted Marshal Marmont, and where, consequently, commenced the line of Marshal Ney. As the troops already under Margaron's command were not sufficient for the task confided to him, Napoleon added to them the division of the young guard commanded by Mortier. Orders were given that the parks of artillery and the baggage should be immediately sent forward, so that they might have defiled across the bridges before the troops came up to them.

After he had despatched his orders, Napoleon had himself proceeded to the Reudnitz faubourg, for the purpose of informing Ney of his plans by his own mouth, and then went on to Leipsic, where he communicated his intentions to the other generals; returning thence at an early hour to his bivouac in the midst of the ranks of the principal army.

As Montfort, the colonel of engineers who had succeeded Rogniat, who had departed for Weissenfels, had been much struck by the difficulty of making the whole army defile by the single bridge of immense length which runs from Leipsic to Lindenau, he had proposed to Berthier to construct additional ones, either above or below this, which might then be reserved for the artillery, cavalry, and baggage. This proposal, however, Berthier had rejected, saying that he knew very well how to execute Napoleon's orders, but that he was not in the habit of anticipating them. And it is probable that Napoleon himself,

had the matter been brought before his notice, would not have been very ready to order what must have been a too early announcement of his retreat. However this might be, the result was that the Lindenau bridge remained as our only means of retreat, a fact which might have, in certain circumstances, the most dangerous results.

Napoleon had scarcely returned to Probstheyda, where he had his bivouac, when he perceived three great columns marching concentrically upon his new line of battle: the Prince of Hesse Homburg advancing towards our right upon Poniatowski and Augereau; whilst in the centre Kleist and Wittgenstein marched from Wachau and Liebert-Wolkwitz upon Probstheyda, where were posted Victor and the guard; and finally, on the left, Klenau, Benningsen, and Bubna advanced upon Zuckelhausen and Holzhausen against Macdonald—this latter column turning its right around our line, and thus threatening Ney's position across the Leipsic plain.

All Napoleon's columns as they retreated had left strong rearguards posted as tirailleurs, which disputed the ground foot by foot, and never gave way until they had inflicted on the enemy severe loss. At Zuckelhausen and Holzhausen, where was posted Macdonald's corps, our troops made head against Zeithen's Prussian division and Klenau's Austrians, and only retreated upon Stötteritz after having made considerable havoc in their ranks. When this last position had been taken by Macdonald, our new line of battle formed a continuous line from Dölitz to Probstheyda, where, forming a right angle, it ascended northwards to the bank of the Partha, by Stötteritz, Melckau, and Schönfeld, at which places were Macdonald, Reynier, and Marmont. Probstheyda was therefore the point which it would be most important for the enemy to carry, and which Napoleon was determined to defend to the utmost.

The column of the Prince of Hesse Homburg threw itself upon Dölitz, carried it, lost it, retook it, and again lost it; the prince himself being seriously wounded, and having to retire from the field. Falling back for a short distance, our troops now took up a position at Connewitz, behind a line of water alternately stagnant or the reverse, which lay from Probstheyda to Connewitz, and ultimately fell into the Pleisse. At this point Poniatowski and Augereau established themselves in a position of invincible strength, which the Austrians in vain attempted to carry by reiterated and desperate assaults.

It was now mid-day, and the sound of artillery from the north announced that Blucher and Bernadotte had entered into action, and became the signal for the army of the Prince of Schwarzenberg of a furious attack upon the decisive point of Probstheyda; which was awaited by Druot with the artillery of the guard.

and by Victor with his infantry. In advancing to the assault the enemy had to ascend a piece of sloping ground in the form of a glacis, and it was when they had reached this that Druot, opening the fire of his guns, overwhelmed them with a storm of missiles, and hurled them back in confusion. Animated, however, by their furious patriotism, they re-formed their ranks, and throwing themselves a second time upon it, succeeded in penetrating it. But again they were driven back by the charge of Victor's infantry, and had to retreat to some distance to re-form their scattered divisions.

Whilst our troops thus resisted the enemy in front of them, another appeared on the left in the shape of the Prussian division Ziethen, which, having in conjunction with Klenau's Austrians made a fruitless attack upon Stötteritz, had fallen back upon Probstheyda, where, however, they were received by a portion of Druot's artillery posted on the left of the village, and which was of itself sufficient to repulse them.

As, after these attempts, in which he had had some twelve thousand men put hors de combat, the Prince of Schwarzenberg could not hope to carry a position which the valour of our soldiers rendered impregnable, he fell back a few hundred steps to some slightly elevated ground which rose opposite Probstheyda, and from thence exchanged with the French one of the most terrible cannonades that had ever been heard.

In the meantime, Benningsen, who was opposed to our left, had attacked Melckau, but less vigorously than Schwarzenberg, because he awaited, before engaging himself seriously, the arrival of Blücher and Bernadotte, to whose proceedings we may now direct our attention.

After having refused to see Bernadotte, Blücher had ultimately consented to an interview with him at eight o'clock in the morning, and it had then been agreed that they should cross the Partha, Bernadotte stipulating that Blücher should lend him thirty thousand men. Agreeing to this arrangement, Blücher had accordingly placed himself at the head of those thirty thousand men which belonged to Langeron's corps, and having crossed the Partha in the neighbourhood of Neutzsch, had descended upon Schönfeld, where was established the second division of Marshal Marmont. In the meantime, Bernadotte, who executed a long and circuitous movement for the purpose of crossing the Partha at as great a distance from the French troops as possible, effected the passage of this river at Taucha, and had then advanced in the presence of General Reynier by Heiterblick.

In advance of Sellerhausen, where Reynier was posted, was a village named Paunsdorf, which Ney was anxious to occupy because he thought that it would enable us not only to interpose

between, but even to prevent, the junction of the armies of Bohemia and the north. Reynier, however, was of a contrary opinion for very sufficient reasons. In fact, he distrusted the Saxons, who were continually murmuring and threatening to desert, and to whom he was unwilling to offer any temptation to leave us by pushing them forward. Ney nevertheless moved them in column towards Paunsdorf, taking care to place the division Durutte behind them, to keep them in check as well as to afford them support. They had no sooner, however, come in sight of the troops of Bernadotte, with whose staff many of them had been in communication, than they marched towards them, turning their pieces against our troops and firing upon the division Durutte, with whom they had served during two years. Ney hastened up to the assistance of the division Durutte, which, suddenly attacked by Bulow's corps, had the greatest possible difficulty in maintaining its position. After an heroic struggle, in which five thousand men contended during more than an hour against twenty thousand, our troops were forced to fall back upon Sellerhausen. In the meantime, Marmont, on the left, had been supporting a desperate engagement at the village of Schönfeld, which was the essential point of our line, and which Blücher was attempting to carry with the troops under Langeron. Within the space of a few hours the division Lagrange lost and retook the village no less than seven times. It was on the point of finally giving way when Ney came up with one of Souham's divisions (Ricard's), and enabled it once more to drive the enemy out of the disputed village. Between Schönfeld and Sellerhausen, Marmont, with the divisions Compans and Friedrichs formed in square, resisted all the assaults of the Prussian and Russian cavalry; but twenty-eight thousand men could not for any long time resist the attack of ninety thousand, and they were consequently at length compelled to yield both Schönfeld and Sellerhausen, and to fall back upon Leipsic, lest Bernadotte and Bubna, now united on the Leipsic plain, should penetrate by the breach made in our line by the defection of the Saxons.

Fortunately the cavalry and artillery of the guard at this moment came up under the command of the emperor himself. The rumour of the defection of the Saxon troops having reached headquarters, had filled all hearts there with dismay, and Napoleon, leaving Murat at Probstheyda, had hastened up to repair this unforeseen misfortune, which put the finishing stroke to our misfortunes.

At this sight Bulow on the one side, and Bubna on the other, formed each a *crochet en arrière*, for the purpose of presenting a flank to our cavalry, which charged them with the utmost desperation, but could make no decided impression on their

dense masses. Their advance, however, was checked, and then on the three fronts of this immense field of battle, extending from Leipsic to Schönfeld on the north, from Schönfeld to Probstheyda on the east, and from Probstheyda to Connowitz on the south, a cannonade of two thousand pieces of ordnance terminated a battle which has been justly called the battle of the giants, and is the greatest of which history makes mention.

Alighting at a simple hotel situated in the centre of the town, Napoleon proceeded to despatch his orders, directing that the various corps of the army should follow the convoys of the matériel, the wounded, and the artillery, across the Lindenau bridge, and that the guard, as soon as the passage of the bridge should have been effected, should take up a position on the Lindenau plateau in such a manner as to present to the enemy a formidable rearguard. At the same time, as an additional precaution against any attack by which the enemy might attempt to harass our retreat across Leipsic, he entrusted to the 7th corps and the division Dombrowski, to the 6th corps and to Souham's division of the 3rd, and to Macdonald, whose corps had suffered less than the others on the 18th, the defence of the several faubourgs of the town, whilst the guard, the cavalry, and the remaining troops of Victor, Augereau, and Ney should accomplish their retreat. They were then to fall back themselves through an extensive boulevard that separated the faubourg from the town, and to proceed to the Lindenau bridge, across the Pleisse and the Elster. At the same time he ordered that a mine should be prepared under the arch of the bridge nearest the town, so that it might be destroyed as soon as the last French corps should have passed, and the head of the enemy's column should appear in sight—an order easily given, but which might be of some hazard in the execution.

To these orders relative to the retreat from Leipsic he added others for the corps left on the Elbe, and which must necessarily be reduced to capitulate, unless, by the exercise of almost super-human energy and presence of mind, they should be concentrated on the Lower Elbe under Marshal Davout, and thus be enabled to reopen the gates of France, now actually closed against them. These orders were to the effect that Marshal St. Cyr, who still had thirty thousand men at his disposal, and who might, by making the best use of his time, crush any opposition the enemy might offer on his road, should proceed from Dresden to Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg successively, and having collected the various garrisons, should join Davout with seventy thousand men. The two marshals being then, as he calculated, at the head of one hundred thousand men, would be able to rescue some of the garrisons on the Oder, and at the head of one



hundred and twenty thousand men to re-enter France by the Wesel.

On the morning of the 19th of October, Napoleon took leave of the royal family of Saxony, whose ruin he had, very unwillingly, involved in his own, and to which he had for a moment restored its ancestral dreams by endowing it with the crown of Poland. Expressing great regret at being compelled to leave his ally exposed to the vengeance of the allies, he urged the old king to treat with them, and to separate his fortunes from those of France, declaring that he, Napoleon, would never consider his so doing any cause for complaint. At the same time he stipulated on his own part never to make a peace by which the interests of Saxony should be sacrificed; and then, after reciprocal embraces, quitted this worthy but unfortunate family, which were terrified to see him delay so long in the midst of dangers which threatened him on every side.

In the meantime, a fresh conflict was taking place around Leipsic between our troops and the enemy. The allied sovereigns, who had expected on this fourth day a continuance of the desperate actions which had been fought during the three preceding days, were as delighted as they were surprised, when at eight or nine o'clock in the morning they perceived the French army moving off across the interminable Lindenau bridge on to the plains of Lutzen. Thanking heaven for a result they had scarcely dared to hope, they ordered an immediate attack on the enceinte of Leipsic, in order to render the retreat of the French army more difficult and disastrous. But on every point the troops of the allies encountered the most determined resistance, for our soldiers had become as irritated as their adversaries, and had resolved, even at the cost of their lives, to exact a severe vengeance for their defeat. The conflict could not be continued on our part, however, for any length of time, not because we were unable to protract our resistance, but because it was necessary that we should concert our movements. Unable as our officers were to communicate from one street of the town to another, they had no means of knowing whether the defence were equally successful in all directions, and whether a too protracted resistance at any one point might not expose those who made it to being cut off by the enemy from the point of retreat. Some Saxon and Baden troops which were in the interior of the town, and fired on our soldiers, added to the confusion. Influenced by the reciprocal fear entertained by each of the several bodies of troops engaged with the enemy on the east, south, and north sides of the town respectively, that it alone had made a successful defence, and that the others had given way, they made an almost simultaneous retreat, debouching from the boulevards which separated the faubourgs from the

town, and hurrying towards the bridge in a confused mass, through which even the enemy's bayonets would have been unable to make an opening.

But whilst this terrible evacuation of Leipsic was thus taking place, a sudden catastrophe, which might have been but too clearly foreseen, spread despair among the ranks of those who for the common safety had been entrusted with the defence of the Leipsic faubourgs. Colonel Montfort, of the engineers, had been ordered to prepare a mine under the first arch of the bridge along which our troops were now effecting their retreat, and he had accordingly done so, and had posted at the spot some sappers with a corporal, who awaited, match in hand, the signal to fire the train. In the meantime, Colonel Montfort, in a state of the most anxious doubt as to what he ought to do, expecting every moment to see the enemy debouch *pêle-mêle* with our soldiers, and unable to obtain any accurate information with respect to the several corps still in the rear, determined to proceed to Lindenau, for the purpose of receiving further instructions from Napoleon's own mouth, and set out towards the other end of the bridge, having first directed the corporal of sappers to fire the mine only in case he should see the enemy approaching. Whilst Colonel Montfort was struggling in the midst of the mass which encumbered the bridge, unable either to advance or recede, some of Blucher's troops, in pursuit of the remnant of Reynier's corps, appearing close to the bridge *pêle-mêle* with the soldiers of the 7th corps, occasioned cries of "Fire the mine! fire the mine!" and the corporal, believing that the right moment had come, applied the match, and thus in a moment condemned twenty thousand of our troops who were still in the Leipsic faubourgs either to perish or to become the prisoners of an enemy whom the feeling of exasperation with which this war was conducted had rendered inhuman. Believing that they had been betrayed, these men uttered shouts of indignation, and swayed by the impulses of despair, now rushed upon the enemy, and now threw themselves into the Pleisse and the Elster, and endeavoured to cross them by swimming. Poniatowski, who had been raised to the rank of marshal by Napoleon on the preceding evening, plunged with his horse into the Elster and reached the other side, but there, weakened by many wounds, and unable to climb the steep bank, disappeared beneath the waters, buried in his glory beneath the ruins of our country and his own. Macdonald, making a similar attempt, was saved; but Reynier and Lauriston, surrounded by the enemy's troops before they had time to escape, were taken and carried before the allied sovereigns, when the Emperor Alexander, recognising Lauriston as the wise ambassador who had endeavoured to prevent the war of 1812, took him by the

hand, and had both him and his companion treated with the utmost courtesy—a courtesy which he was far from displaying towards the unfortunate King of Saxony, who thrice during the morning sent officers to request an interview, which was refused, the one reply to his solicitations being, that he, the King of Saxony, had been taken with arms in his hands, and was therefore a prisoner of war; that the allied sovereigns would decide upon his fate, and would inform him of their decision.

In the meantime, the broken ranks of the French army were continuing their retreat across the numerous arms of the Pleisse and the Elster, leaving twenty thousand of their soldiers either prisoners or dying in the streets of Leipsic, or drowned in the bloodstained waters of the Pleisse and the Elster. This last of the four disastrous days of Leipsic raised the loss of the French army in killed, wounded, or prisoners to the number of sixty thousand men. The enemy had lost an equal number in action; but their wounded had received all the grateful care that German patriotism could lavish on them, whilst ours had met with, alas! how different a treatment.

Such was this long and tragic battle of Leipsic—one of the most bloody and certainly the greatest ever fought, and which terminated so disastrously the campaign of Saxony, which at Lutzen and Bautzen had commenced so auspiciously. Had Napoleon been a less great general, in a situation in which it would not have been necessary for him to endeavour by a single stroke to re-establish gigantic fortunes, and in which no hundred motives of pride had impelled him to shut his eyes to the truth, and had he, lastly, been less accustomed than he was to seek in bold and complicated combinations the attainment of extraordinary results, he might have succeeded in obtaining, if not victory, at least a position of safety. But the simple course by which he might have arrived at this end Napoleon's character, his pride, and present need of some extraordinary triumph, had now barred against him. If we examine the various circumstances of this campaign, we shall discover the real cause of the disasters with which it was thronged to have been, not in the diminution of our captain's military talents, but in the illusions of which he was made the victim by his pride, in the necessity he was under of regaining by a single stroke the immense prosperity he had lost, in his repugnance to acknowledge sufficiently early that he had been defeated—in all the errors, in short, which are observable in the common gambler, who risks in folly the riches which in folly have been acquired.

After such a series of reverses, to return immediately to the Rhine was the only course Napoleon could now pursue. Of the three hundred and sixty thousand troops he had at his disposal,

without taking into account those in garrison, at the commencement of hostilities, there now remained to him at the most but one hundred and ten thousand, and those in a most deplorable condition. The only military weapon which he still possessed in any considerable quantity was his artillery, which was still very numerous and well served, and which, if a source of embarrassment on the road, was at the same time a most precious resource on the day of battle.

The night of the 19th of October was passed by Napoleon and the wrecks of his army in the neighbourhood of Lutzen. On the following morning Napoleon hastened to Weissenfels, which was in the hands of Bertrand and Mortier, who had beaten Giulay, and thus secured the possession of the Saale. Our object now was, of course, to precede the enemy's troops at the critical points on the line of our retreat. If we followed on the left the grand route leading from Weissenfels to Hamburg and Jena, we should come to the famous Kosen defile where Marshal Davout had covered himself with glory by the defence of the Awerstädt plain, and where we should be now exposed to the danger of finding Giulay, who, repulsed by Bertrand and Mortier, would probably there seek his revenge. The plan upon which Napoleon determined, therefore, was to make a detour to the right, and instead of passing the Saale at Naumburg, to cross it at Weissenfels, then to proceed to Freiberg for the purpose of there effecting the passage of the Unstrutt, and to debouch from thence upon the Weimar and Erfurth plain; Bertrand, in the meantime, advancing by a rapid movement to the left on the Kosen defile, to reach it, if possible, before the enemy, and to defend himself there as long as he might be able against the grand army of the Prince of Schwarzenberg.

The orders which Napoleon gave in accordance with this plan were punctually executed; and whilst Bertrand, accompanied by Mortier, who commanded two divisions of the young guard, proceeded to Freiberg, took possession of the stone bridge across the Unstrutt, and then advanced to Kosen, which he reached before the enemy, the main body of the army passed the Saale at Weissenfels on the 21st, and pushed on to Freiberg, where it employed the whole of the night of the 21st and the following day in effecting the passage of the Unstrutt, which it was enabled to do by the energetic resistance made by Marshal Oudinot on the banks of that river to the Prussian troops of the corps of General d'York.

In the meantime Bertrand, whose arrival at Kosen had anticipated that of Giulay, had fought a desperate battle with the latter, in which he had been completely victorious, successfully defending his position, and only abandoning it when he knew that Oudinot had evacuated Freiberg, and that the whole of

our columns had defiled upon Erfurth, where, on the 23rd, the entire mass of our army was assembled, and where Napoleon halted two days for the purpose of refreshing and reorganising his troops, and endeavouring to bring back to their ranks a portion of the enormous number of our troops who had scattered themselves over the country, carried away by the marauding spirit which the season, the badness of the weather, and the age of our troops had combined to spread through our army to the most enormous extent.

Napoleon took advantage of these two days of comparative leisure to write to Paris, to make his position known to the principal members of his government, and to require them to provide him with fresh levies of well-grown men in addition to the two hundred and eighty thousand men already demanded. "I cannot," he said, "defend France with children. Nothing exceeds the courage of our French youth, but at the first sign of disaster they betray the characteristics of their age." At the same time he demanded supplies of money, directing that five hundred millions of francs should be raised by means of a war tax, to be added to all the direct or indirect imposts already in existence.

To the melancholy circumstances, by which Napoleon was at this time surrounded was added the withdrawal of Murat, who alleged as reasons for his departure the necessity of defending Italy, and the hope that he might be able by his personal exertions to furnish Prince Eugène with thirty thousand well-organised Neapolitan troops. Napoleon admitted the force of these reasons, as he also admitted to himself that Murat would not fail to yield to the current that had set in against him, and would follow the example of those German princes, our allies, who after having been gorged by us for ten years with the riches of the German Church, now pretended that they had been the victims of France. But whilst he perceived, as he did, that Murat's defection was but too imminent, he forgave him for it beforehand, so to say; and on taking leave of him received his parting protestations of fidelity as sincere, and repeatedly embraced him with a heart overflowing with grief.

It had now become absolutely necessary that the army should continue its march, for the allied troops were advancing in every direction, and the presence was announced of a fresh enemy in our rear, ready to close against us our road to France. This enemy was no other than the Bavarian army, so long our companion in arms, and which was eager to atone for its long alliance with us by a defection which should resemble as closely as possible that of Bernadotte and the Saxons.

The feeble Bavarian king, attached as he was to Napoleon by the numerous benefits which the latter had heaped upon

him, and supported in his policy of an alliance with France by an enlightened and ambitious minister, who had sought therein his own aggrandisement as well as that of his country, had been able as long as Napoleon was prosperous to successfully resist the opposition offered to this policy by his wife, a vain, obstinate-minded princess, sister of the Empress of Russia and the Queen of Sweden, and by his son, who, more addicted to the arts of peace than those of war, had been in Napoleon's service and somewhat harshly treated by him. But although the Bavarian monarch was able to resist this opposition as long as he could point to the substantial benefits he derived from Napoleon's alliance, the disastrous character of recent events, the losses sustained by the Bavarian corps in the battle of Dennewitz, and the efforts of the three courts of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, had shaken the fidelity of the Bavarian court to our cause to a great extent, when General de Wrède arrived in Munich deeply wounded by the contemptuous treatment he had endured at the hands of Marshal St. Cyr, under whom he had served during the campaign of the Dwina, and loud in his complaints against us. After our victories at Lutzen and Bautzen both he and the Bavarian court had become reconciled to us, but Napoleon's refusal to bestow upon him the grand cordon of the Legion of Honour which had become vacant by the death of General des Roys, and which had been requested for him by M. d'Argenteau, had again filled him with discontent against us, and on finding himself in command of the Bavarian army posted on the Inn, opposite the Austrian army of the Prince de Reuss, he had seized the opportunity to enter into negotiations with the allies, who offered to him, General Wrède, the command of the two Bavarian and Austrian armies then on the Inn, and to the Bavarian monarch the preservation of his States, an equivalent in territory and revenue being given in exchange for the Tyrol and the districts on the banks of the Inn. M. de Mongelas, perceiving that he could only maintain his position by changing his policy, favoured the acceptance of these proposals; and the king, unable to resist the solicitations of his wife, son, people, minister, and general, and terrified at the prospect held out to him, should he persist in rejecting the offers of the allies, of having to evacuate his capital before the Austrian army, had hesitated no longer, but signed on the 8th of October a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with the allied sovereigns. As soon as this treaty had been signed, General Wrède, anxious to secure the favour of the chiefs of the coalition, and to ensure his marshal's baton, had hastened to carry the Austro-Bavarian army, which numbered some sixty thousand men, from the Inn to the Upper Danube, and from the Danube to the Main, and had marched with such rapidity

that he was said to have already arrived at Wurzburg, and to be ready to bar against us the Mayence route in the environs of Frankfort.

On receiving this information Napoleon resolved to set out immediately from Erfurth by the Mayence route, and after three days passed at Erfurth, marched for Eisenach, in order to precede the allied troops in the passage of the defiles of the Thuringian forest. The total number of his troops actually in their ranks at this time did not exceed seventy thousand, so widely had the vice of disbandment spread amongst our troops during their progress from Leipsic to Erfurth.

The allied armies, after having passed two or three days in Leipsic, had been distributed in a new manner, and had then proceeded towards their ulterior destination; General Klenau being sent to reduce Dresden, General Tauenzien to continue the siege of Torgau and Wittenberg, and General Benningsen, with the so-called Polish army, to blockade, and if possible gain possession of Magdeburg and Hamburg. The army of the north had been marched upon Cassel in order to complete, should it not already have been accomplished, the destruction of the monarchy of King Jerome. It was then to return towards Westphalia, Hanover, and Holland. Finally, Blucher and the Prince of Schwarzenberg, with about one hundred and sixty thousand men, had hastened in pursuit of Napoleon's army, Blucher being directed upon Eisenach, from whence he was to proceed, not to Frankfort, but to Wetzlar, in order to prevent Napoleon, when he should be cut off from the Mayence route, from throwing himself upon that of Coblenz. The grand army of Bohemia, divided into two portions, was to march, the one part by Eisenach, Fulde, and Frankfort upon Mayence; the other part by Gotha, Smalkalden, and Schweinfurt upon Wurzburg.

The allied forces having been thus distributed, each portion of them proceeded in pursuit of the French army; and on the 26th and 27th of October, Oudinot's and Mortier's rearguard, composed of the young guard, was attacked by the impetuous Blucher, the result of the action being a loss of about a thousand men on each side.

On the 26th, Napoleon slept at Vach, beyond the Thuringian defiles; on the 27th at Hünfeld, on the 28th at Schlütern. When we had reached the slope of the Thuringian forest which looks towards the Rhine the enemy's pursuit became much less vigorous, the reason being that Blucher had turned to the right for the purpose of marching by Wetzlar upon the Rhine, whilst the Prussians and Russians had proceeded on the left towards Wurzburg. On the 27th information reached Schlütern that General Wrede was at Wurzburg, which he was bombarding,

and from whence he had but a step to take to cut off the route leading from Hainau to Mayence. An advanced guard of our troops was now sent forward with such portions of our baggage train and stragglers as could be collected, in order that the movements of the army might be as free as possible from encumbrance; and during the 27th and 28th of October from fifteen to eighteen thousand of our disorganised troops were enabled by the prudent measures taken by Marshal the Duke de Valmy to reach Mayence. But on the 29th the road was completely closed, for General Wrede, despairing of overcoming the resistance made by General Thareau, the governor of Wurzburg, had left a simple detachment to blockade this fortress, and had then proceeded to Hainau with sixty thousand men, half of whom were Bavarians, half Austrians. Having arrived there, he had moved a division upon Frankfort, and had posted himself with the bulk of his forces before Hainau, in the forest of Lamboy, through which the grand route passes.

On the 29th, Napoleon having arrived at Langen-Sebold, learnt that the head of the army had been driven back upon him, and that the Austro-Bavarian troops to the number of fifty or sixty thousand men were pretending to close the Rhine route against him. Indignant at such impudence, he resolved to hasten his march on the 30th, and to proceed himself at the head of his old guard to reopen the route. Unfortunately there remained of his army at this time no more than about forty or fifty thousand men under arms, so greatly had disorganisation increased amongst his troops during the last marches; and even of these forty or fifty thousand Napoleon had no more than a third at his immediate disposal on the 30th. Nevertheless, he resolved to throw himself upon the Bavarian army and to make it repent its temerity; for it was important that the route should be opened before the obstacle which closed it should have had time to increase and become consolidated. On the morning of the 30th, accordingly, he set out from Langen-Sebold and marched upon Hainau.

When they had advanced some distance our troops fell in with General de Wrede's advanced guard, which was posted at Rükingen, and having driven this back and pursued it with vigour, they came upon the Austro-Bavarian army itself, in front of the forest of Lamboy, through which passes the great Mayence route. Napoleon immediately hastened up in person at the head of his advanced guard to reconnoitre the enemy's dispositions. He had at his immediate disposal at this moment only the cavalry of the advanced guard, and the five thousand infantry still remaining to Macdonald and Victor. Posting on the right, under General Charpentier, the infantry of Macdonald's corps, and on the left, under General Dubreton, that of Marshal



Victor, he ordered them to spread *en tirailleurs* amongst the woods; and then took up his own position with the whole of his cavalry on the grand route. Our *tirailleurs* speedily gained ground upon the flank of the troops which supported the enemy's artillery, and compelled them to fall back. Soon afterwards a portion of our own artillery, having been brought up, directed a vigorous fire upon that of the Bavarian army, and forced it to retire. In this manner the enemy had been driven into the interior of the forest, the greater portion of which we had traversed in their track, when, the division Curial of the old guard having come up, Napoleon threw two battalions of this division upon the enemy's retreating column, and by this means completely drove them out of the forest into the plain. On reaching the outskirts of the wood Napoleon perceived some fifty thousand hostile troops drawn up in battle array in front of Kinzig, resting on one side on the Pont de Lamboy, and on the other on the city of Hainau. Napoleon awaited, before debouching from the wood, the arrival of the whole of his artillery as well as of the infantry and cavalry of the old guard; he then ranged eighty pieces of artillery on the outskirts of the forest, extended to the left the great bearskin hats of the division Friant, and to the right the cavalry of Sebastiani, Lefebvre-Desnoette, and Nansouty.

After some moments of a violent cannonade Napoleon threw the whole of his cavalry upon that of General Wrède, and drove it back by a single charge upon the Austrian squadrons. The latter charged in their turn, but the exasperation of our cavalry was at its height, and overwhelming all that came in its way it drove back the left of the Austro-Bavarian army upon the Kinzig and Hainau. At the centre the enemy's cavalry in the course of these repeated charges threw themselves for a moment upon the eighty pieces of artillery of the guard; but when our infantry had hastened up to the rescue they found that Druot and his artillerymen had already driven them back.

Driven back upon the Kinzig, General de Wrède could see no other course open to him save that of throwing back his army towards his right for the purpose of making it repass the Kinzig at the Pont de Lamboy. To favour this movement and procure the space he needed to effect it in, he attempted an attack upon our left, where were posted Friant's grenadiers, who fully shared the exasperation of the whole of the army, and who, supported by Marmont's troops, which had begun to come up, attacked the Bavarians at the point of the bayonet, and driving them back upon the troops now occupied in effecting the passage of the Kinzig, struck down with their bayonets some seven or eight hundred of them. De Wrède repassed the Kinzig in disorder, leaving in our hands ten or eleven thousand

dead, wounded, or prisoners; our own loss in this brilliant action, in which the majesty of the French army was worthily avenged, having been at the most no more than three thousand.

We had no time, however, to lose in counting our trophies, for General de Wrède having fallen back with forty thousand men behind the Kinzig, might easily perceive the smallness of our force, and debouch from Hainau for the purpose of barring our road. On the following day, the 31st, Napoleon set out with Sebastiani, Lefebvre-Desnoette, Macdonald, and the old guard, to open the Mayence route, leaving Marmont on the banks of the Kinzig for the purpose of preventing the enemy from debouching from Hainau.

On the morning of the 31st, Marshal Marmont took possession of Hainau, which the enemy in his terror had almost entirely evacuated, and then marched onwards, confiding the guard of this post to General Bertrand, who followed him. On the morning of the 1st of November, General de Wrède attempted to debouch from the Kinzig, traversing the Pont de Lamboy on our left, and endeavouring to retake Hainau on our right. In front of the Pont de Lamboy, Bertrand had placed the division Guilleminot, in the centre the division Morand, and partly in Hainau, partly along the bank of the Kinzig, the Italian division.

At daybreak de Wrède attacked the Italians in Hainau, and entered the town, driving them upon the Pont de la Kinzig, which he attempted to seize, but in vain, for Morand, firing from behind the Kinzig upon his column in flank, covered it with projectiles, and the Italians, taking courage, returned to the charge, and drove the Bavarians into Hainau; de Wrède receiving a wound of so serious a nature that it was supposed to be mortal.

An attempt made at the same moment on our left by the Austro-Bavarian troops to cross the Kinzig by the half-burnt chevalets of the Pont de Lamboy being equally unsuccessful, our cannon were at length free to pass along the Mayence road, which was so covered with dead bodies that they rolled, as an illustrious eye-witness (Marshal Gerard) expressed it, in a trench of human flesh.

General Bertrand's corps had been the last to take the Hainau route; for Marshal Mortier, with the young guard, having been informed of the difficulties to be encountered on this road, had made a detour to the right, and had reached Frankfort in safety. On the 4th of November the grand army completed its entrance into Mayence, mournfully triumphant!

And thus we returned to the Rhine, which had become so wholly our own, that six months before we should have considered it a great proof of our moderation if we had been willing

to permit it to bound our empire! That Rhine which it was now doubtful if we could defend! Napoleon had thought so much of conquest and so little of the defence of his kingdom that it was almost entirely undefended. Even the vast preparations which had been ordered by M. de Bassano after the battle of Dennewitz had been countermanded by Napoleon on account of the expense and of the alarm which he feared they might be the means of spreading through the districts on the Rhine. Of all the fortresses on this frontier which should have been the first object of our care, Mayence alone contained the means of defence. But to have defended it an army would have been necessary, and that which now entered it, although it was the grand army, could not furnish more than forty thousand effective troops.

Napoleon, wishing to keep at Mayence the best of his troops, left there the 4th corps under General Bertrand; intending that it should form the advanced guard of the future army which he hoped to form. At this time it only numbered fifteen thousand troops, but within a few days by great exertions it was raised to the number of twenty and odd thousand men. Lefebvre-Desnoette was attached to it with the light cavalry of the guard and the old dragoons of the 5th corps, comprising altogether some three or four thousand horse. It was also furnished with a good supply of cannon. The defence of the Rhine was divided between the three marshals Marmont, Macdonald, and Victor; Marshal Marmont being charged with the defence of so much as lay between Landau and Coblentz, whilst Marshal Macdonald was sent to Cologne, and Marshal Victor was established at Strasburg.

After having remained a week at Mayence, Napoleon set out for Paris on the 7th of November, that he might at the centre of his government prepare the means for carrying on a new and last campaign. And whilst he was occupied in making unheard-of efforts to draw from exhausted France the resources which it still contained, and to hold in check upon its frontiers the enemy whose long-continued impression had rendered it implacable against us, he had upon the Rhine and the Vistula, besieged or blockaded by the legions of allied Europe, soldiers sufficient to have formed one of the best armies he had ever assembled. He had left at Modin three thousand men, at Zamosa three thousand, at Dantzic twenty-eight, at Glogau eight, at Custrin four, at Stettin twelve, at Dresden thirty, at Torgau twenty-six, at Wittenberg three, at Magdeburg twenty-five, at Hamburg forty, at Erfurth six, at Wurzburg two, amounting altogether to a force of one hundred and ninety thousand serviceable troops (for we have omitted in this enumeration the sick and

wounded), and capable of forming, could they only have been concentrated, an army equal to any that had ever followed the French flag. By Napoleon's error, however, in withdrawing from the Elbe without also withdrawing the garrisons, they had been sacrificed—sacrificed to a blind confidence in victory, and to a disastrous desire of re-establishing in a single day the fortunes shattered by the irreparable faults of years.

These garrisons might still have been saved, however, had some bold and fortunate general, finding himself at the head of one of them, sallied forth from his fortress, and cutting his way through the blockading troops, rallied the other garrisons in succession, and by this means have enabled himself probably, considering the small number of troops left by the allies in their rear, to have reached the Elbe and the Rhine, and entered France at the head of a considerable force. And if we examine the circumstances attending each of the several fortresses in question, we shall find that it was at Dresden, by Marshal St. Cyr, that a plan of this sort might most reasonably have been expected to be formed. In the first place, Dresden was not a fortress where there could be any hope of making a protracted defence against a besieging force, but rather a mere military post which Napoleon had only expected to preserve for a time, and the evacuation of which he had all but ordered when he directed Marshal St. Cyr, should unforeseen circumstances prevent his continuance in Dresden, to move upon Torgau. The natural idea, indeed, on the arrival at Dresden of the information that Napoleon had retreated to the Rhine, would seem to be to evacuate it. An additional reason would be, that this fortress, after the departure of the grand army, had no further importance, since it covered nothing, remained entirely isolated, and was entirely destitute of provisions. In two days' march its garrison might have reached Torgau, where it would have found twenty-six thousand men, of whom eighteen thousand were excellent French troops, and together with whom it would have formed a force numbering forty-eight thousand men, superior to all the hostile troops on the banks of the Elbe. Three thousand would have been obtained from Wittenberg, and in two days Magdeburg might have been reached, where there were some eighteen or twenty thousand more. On his arrival at Hamburg, Marshal St. Cyr would have found himself at the head of a force of one hundred and ten thousand men; and what, then, could have prevented him from reaching the Rhine? If then the one hundred and seventy thousand French troops, left by a deplorable error of Napoleon's on the Vistula, the Oder, and the Elbe, had any chance of being saved, it could only have been, as respects at least one hundred thousand of them, by means of some

spontaneous resolution of Marshal St. Cyr's. Such a resolution, however, he did not take, and from the facts themselves must be judged whether he was sufficiently justified in not having taken it.

Napoleon had scarcely quitted Dresden for Düben when incessant movements had taken place of the enemy's troops around Dresden, and they had rapidly disappeared, leaving before this city a force of very insignificant strength. Marshal St. Cyr had immediately perceived the disappearance of the enemy's troops, and had taken the very legitimate and praiseworthy resolution of inflicting a blow on the feeble blockading corps which had been left before him. Some days afterwards, no information having arrived from the grand army, he and those around him began to be uneasy, and to entertain the idea of leaving Dresden, where, if they remained, they could do nothing but perish. This idea having become widely spread, Marshal St. Cyr summoned a council of war, composed of the Count de Lobau, General Durosnel, General Mathieu, and some others, in which the Count de Lobau advised a retreat upon Torgau, where they would find a numerous garrison, an abundant supply of provisions, and the Magdeburg route still open. To this the other generals, afraid of assuming the responsibility of a retreat, objected that the time had not come when they could fairly consider themselves abandoned, and take so decisive a step. Soon, however, the undissembled joy of the Saxons, and the communications of the enemy, who were interested in inspiring us with despair, informed our generals of the disaster of Leipsic and Napoleon's forced retreat upon the Rhine; and henceforth it was evident that there was only one step to be taken, and that immediately, before all the routes should be closed.

Marshal St. Cyr, however, still hesitated, and proved on this occasion that the possession of very noble qualities may not necessarily lead a man to pursue the wisest course under certain circumstances, for, instead of adopting some decided plan of action, he sent a messenger to Torgau to inquire whether his troops could be supplied there with provisions should he fall back upon that place; and his agent, having succeeded in reaching Torgau, received there an answer in the affirmative, but on attempting to return was stopped. The consequence was, that Marshal St. Cyr received no reply, and remained in a state of hesitation not only during the latter part of October, but even during the first days of November. At length, after the lapse of two weeks, all hope of succour having vanished, and the line of blockade having been drawn closer, he adopted the plan of sending Count de Lobau on to Torgau, by the right bank of the Elbe, with fourteen thousand troops, resolving, if

these should succeed in reaching Torgau, to follow them with the remainder of his army. The Count de Lobau very justly objected, that the enterprise, which would have been certain of success fifteen days before and with the whole of the *corps d'armée*, would be a very hazardous matter at the present moment with only half of the corps. Nevertheless, he obeyed the orders he had received, and set out from Dresden on the 8th of November, taking with him as his lieutenant the brave and talented General Bonnet. At some leagues from Dresden, on the right bank of the river, he encountered the enemy's advanced posts, and having continued his march in spite of these, found farther on a well-defended position which could evidently be carried only at the expense of considerable loss, but which presented no insurmountable obstacle. At the same time the movements of the enemy showed that they were moving upon the rear of our troops for the purpose of preventing their return to Dresden, and that in their desire to effect this object, they were of their own accord leaving open the Torgau route. Had the whole *corps d'armée* been now together, such a movement on the part of the enemy would have been one highly favourable to ourselves; but as one-half of the *corps d'armée* still remained in Dresden, it could not but cause our generals considerable anxiety, and they hastened to return to this city lest they should be cut off from the troops which still remained there.

When the Count de Lobau's column had re-entered Dresden the false step which had been taken was considered as sufficient condemnation of any enterprise in the direction of Torgau, and as there was no other which could be for a moment entertained, our troops awaited, in a state of the deepest despondency, the issue of the deplorable position in which they found themselves. Provisions began to fail, and the frightful contagion which spread from the Elbe to the Rhine raged through the city. The inhabitants, still submissive, but rendered desperate by the long continuance of our stay, entreated us to withdraw from their capital; and on the 11th, no hope remaining to them except that of a glorious death, our troops capitulated on conditions which could not but be regarded as favourable. The garrison were to lay down their arms, and to march back to France, with permission to serve again after they had been exchanged. Those who had signed these terms were able to flatter themselves that they had escaped from the disastrous situation in which they had been involved on conditions very injurious neither to themselves nor to France, which they would soon be in a condition to defend. Our troops set out, therefore, with more hope than despondency; but they had scarcely quitted Dresden when General Klenau, to the general consternation, made known to them, with many excuses, that the

Emperor Alexander refused to agree to the terms of the capitulation, and demanded that the garrison should regard themselves as prisoners of war, without permission to return to France. Marshal St. Cyr exclaimed against this conduct with the most indignant vehemence, but the only reply he received was the ironical one, that if he chose to return to Dresden, and place himself in his old position, he was quite welcome to do so—as if such a return were possible into the midst of a city delighted at our withdrawal, and most disinclined to receive us again, and where our means of defence were either destroyed or exposed.

As no measure for effecting their rescue had been set on foot at Dresden, the only point at which there existed any considerable body of French troops with a general of elevated rank and recognised capacity, it remained as a necessary consequence that each of our garrisons must perish miserably in its fortress, succumbing either to hunger, typhus fever, or captivity. Torgau, indeed, where there were more than twenty-six thousand men, under the brilliant Count de Narbonne, and which was well provided with all kinds of provisions, was in a position to make a protracted defence, for a fall from his horse having compelled General Bernard to remain there for a time, he had joined there Count de Narbonne with the utmost zeal in taking every measure that could enable the garrison to effect a most determined resistance. But the most formidable of enemies had sprung up within the walls, and not only carried off the garrison by thousands, but included in its ravages the Count de Narbonne himself, who died most deeply regretted by his troops and all who had known him. He was replaced as governor of the fortress by General Dutailis, who displayed the utmost valour, but could do but little more than witness the slow agonies of a garrison almost equal to an army.

At Wittenberg, General Lapoype, being well supplied with provisions, and having but few sick within the walls of his fortress, was prepared with the three thousand men under his command to make a protracted defence. At Magdeburg, General Lemarois being in similar circumstances, had taken a like resolution. At Hamburg, Marshal Davout, who had returned thither when the movement which he had commenced with thirty-two thousand troops upon Berlin had been rendered impossible by the result of the battles of Gross-Beeren and Dennewitz, was resolved with the forty thousand soldiers at his disposal to maintain a long siege, or rather, for such was its real nature, a defensive campaign calculated to cover Lower Germany, Holland, and the Lower Rhine.

On the river Oder the fortresses Stettin, Custrin, and Glogau still held out, but simply for the honour of the French arms,

defending themselves against all hope, simply for the glory of the flag under which they fought. And what is thus true of them is even more so, if possible, of the immortal garrison of Dantzic, which, having been uninterruptedly blockaded since the month of January, had only once received any news from France. On retiring into the fortress in December 1812, after the retreat from Russia, General Rapp had shut himself up there with about thirty-six thousand effective troops, and some thousands of wounded; but of this number almost four thousand had been speedily carried off by the terrible *fevre de congelation*, which was produced by exposure to cold, as the *hospital fever* was by moisture and bad air. The troops which remained were inured to arms, and well commanded, but insufficient for the defence of the immense works of Dantzic, which consisted of the fortress itself, an entrenched camp, and the citadel of Weichselmunde, situated at the mouth of the Vistula. The first proceeding which General Rapp had found it necessary to take on entering the fortress was to break the ice on the waters of the Vistula, which surrounded all its works, and which would have enabled the enemy to have advanced up to its walls and carried it by escalade. Having prepared the preliminary defensive works, the garrison had driven back the enemy, and by a series of adventurous excursions to the isles of the Vistula, procured an abundant supply of every kind of provisions. On the resumption of hostilities after the armistice, it numbered some twenty-five thousand effective troops, thoroughly prepared to undergo the fatigues of a siege. The exterior works, after having been valiantly defended, had been ultimately lost; but General Rapp, assisted by skilled officers of the engineers, had constructed some well-planned and well-armed redoubts, which, taking the enemy's trenches in flank, had rendered them untenable. After a series of desperate combats around these redoubts, the enemy, at length, despairing of being able to carry them, resolved to have recourse to a bombardment, and directed against Dantzic the most formidable artillery that had ever been levelled against any besieged place—the fire of a hundred English gunboats being added to that of the land batteries. During the whole of October the most terrific bombardment ever known continued without pause and without mercy, and on the 1st November the timber yards of Dantzic having been set on fire, there ensued a fearful conflagration, which was not extinguished until three-fourths of the vast depôt of wood which the town contained had been consumed. In the meantime, General Rapp, not caring to consider what must be the issue of this war after the disaster of Leipsic, only adhered to the instructions he had received, and which were to the effect that he was only to surrender Dantzic when he should receive an order so to do, written



and signed by Napoleon's own hand. Modlin and Zamosa, after having been well defended, had capitulated, and the Polish garrisons had been led away into captivity.

Thus had lived or died on the Elbe, the Oder, and the Vistula the one hundred and ninety thousand troops left so distant from the Rhine, which they might have rendered invincible. And thus had terminated this campaign of 1813, by means of which Napoleon had resolved to repair the disasters of the campaign of 1812, and by means of which he might indeed have repaired them, had he only known how to put bounds to his desires.

This great and terrible campaign, which is unequalled in the history of the world, whether we regard the immensity of the struggles, the variety of its combinations, or the terrible effusion of human blood which resulted from it, is marked, as respects Napoleon, by one peculiar and significant trait, which we have already pointed out, which is the fact that it ended in his losing everything, simply because he attempted to regain at a single throw all that he had already lost. If after the victories at Lutzen and Bautzen, when victory had been restored to his arms by his genius and the courage of his young soldiers, he had driven back the Russian and Prussian armies as far as the Vistula, without accepting the armistice of Pleiswitz, he would have separated them from the Austrians, and inflicted a fatal blow upon the coalition. But to have done this effectually, it would have been necessary that he should have given some satisfactory reply to Austria, who pressed him to give some decided explanation relative to the terms on which he would make peace. And what Napoleon's motive was in accepting this armistice we cannot but too well remember. It was, as has been already described in these pages, that he might have time to prepare an army against Austria, and put himself in a position in which he might safely refuse to submit to any, even the most moderate, conditions she might propose.

We have seen also how easy it would have been for Napoleon, even during the armistice, by the sacrifice of the Duchy of Warsaw, which could not possibly survive the Russian campaign, of the Protectorate of the Rhine, which was simply an aimless insult to Germany, and by the restoration of independence to the Hanseatic towns—to have secured the possession of Piedmont, Tuscany, and Rome as French departments, and Westphalia, Lombardy, and Naples as kingdom vassals of the French empire. And when he had resolved upon continuing the war, had he only taken advantage of the armistice to withdraw from Zamosa, Modlin, Dantzic, Stettin, Custrin, and Glogau the sixty thousand men there was no reason, either political or military, for leaving there, all might still have been

well. But in this matter, as in many others, carried away by the desire of re-establishing everything by a single victory on the Oder or the Vistula, Napoleon persisted in making this deplorable sacrifice which involved so many others. In order to keep up communications with his garrisons, he extended the circle of this concentric war to forty leagues on the side of Goldberg, to fifty in the direction of Berlin, and obtained the glorious victory of Dresden; but at the moment when he was reaping the first fruits of this triumph at Kulm he was called away by the disasters of his lieutenants, left at too great a distance from himself, marched to their assistance, arrived too late, passed two months in exhausting himself and his troops in useless expeditions, and finally, instead of making a simple retreat upon the Elbe, which, by enabling him to collect the troops left upon the Elbe, might still have saved him, being still led away by the desire of restoring his fortunes by some one brilliant stroke, attempted on Düben a series of brilliant manœuvres which, admirably conceived as they were, failed, because the means by which he attempted to execute them were not proportioned to the boldness of his enterprise. And then, caught as it were in the snare of his own combinations, he was at length forced to succumb on the plains of Leipsic, after the most terrible battle recorded in history, in which, horrible to say, there perished more than a hundred thousand men.

It is very certain that in these disastrous days Napoleon was no less fertile in great combinations, no less energetic, no less imperturbable in the hour of danger than he had ever been, but he was always the ambitious man whose insatiable desires disturbed and perverted the immensity of his genius. In 1812, in consequence of attempting the impossible, he suffered a gigantic check. In 1813, not for the purpose merely of repairing this reverse, but with the object of utterly and instantaneously effacing it, he took steps which led to another as disastrous and more irreparable. And now when a single step further would lead him into the abyss, would Napoleon pause upon the fatal slope? The allies, remaining immovable when they had reached the bank of the Rhine, trembled at the idea of crossing this formidable boundary, and were resolved to offer to Napoleon France, truly so called, the country which the Rhine and the Alps so greatly embrace and protect, and with which, after Marengo and Hohenlinden, he had been contented. Would he be contented with it in 1814? Such was the last question which the Sphinx of destiny was to propose to his pride. According to the answer which he should make to this question would his career end on the greatest of earthly thrones, or in the depths of human misfortune. Let us, forget for a

moment that history of 1814 and 1815 which we all know but too well, let us efface the echo which resounded in our ears, young then, of that glorious throne; let us place ourselves in that month of December 1813, let us endeavour to ignore all that took place in 1814, and put to ourselves the question which was now put to Napoleon. And then—which of us, after having read the recital of the Russian and Saxony campaigns, could doubt what must be the answer? Alas! men have within themselves a destiny which they seek around them, above them, everywhere, in short, except in their own hearts, where it really abides, and which, according as they obey their passions or their reason, either destroys or saves them, whatever they may do, whatever may be their genius. And when they are lost, they exclaim against their soldiers, their generals, their allies, against mankind, against Heaven, and declare that these betrayed them, when, in fact, they betrayed themselves.

## BOOK LI.

### THE INVASION.

**N**APOLÉON had just brought back the French army to the Rhine in the most deplorable condition. The guard was reduced from 40,000 to 10,000 men. D'Oudinot's corps (the 12th), de Reynier's (the 7th), d'Angereau's (the 16th), de Bertrand's (the 4th)—all now collected into one body under General Morand—did not amount to 12,000 fighting men on the day of their entrance into Mayence, which they were charged to defend. Marmont's and Ney's corps, appointed, under Marmont, to defend the Rhine, from Manheim to Coblentz, had not 8000 men under arms. The second, under Victor, had at the utmost 5000 men to defend the Upper Rhine, from Strasburg to Bâle. Macdonald's corps and Lauriston's (the 11th and 5th), assembled under Marshal Macdonald, and destined for the Lower Rhine, had not 9000 efficient men to defend the banks of this noble river from Coblentz to Arnheim. The French cavalry, divided into four bodies, ill mounted, or else actually on foot, could not muster 10,000 cavalry soldiers fit for service. The Poles, reduced almost to nothing, had been sent to Sedan, where their dépôt was, to try to recruit. In short, a mass of stragglers, without arms, without clothes, bearing about them the germs of typhus fever, with which they infected every place through which they passed, recrossed the frontiers in small troops. It was almost a repetition of the retreat from Russia, with this difference—that there remained about 60,000 men under arms, and that instead of falling back upon resentful Germany, we were retiring into France, where we indeed found a home, but a home desolate and laid waste. The disaster of Moscow might have appeared only an accident, but an accident mighty as the destiny that presided over our fortunes; but the campaign of 1813, following upon that of 1812, bore witness to the total desertion of fortune, and the ruin of a system to which was opposed the interest as well as the good sense of the civilised world, and which even the vastest genius was not sufficient to maintain against the current of events.

If such was the condition of things in the locality where

Napoleon had commanded in person, it was scarcely more satisfactory elsewhere; and his lieutenants, whether in Italy or in Spain, had not been more fortunate than himself.

Prince Eugène, appointed to defend the Julian Alps, had succeeded in drawing upon the old sources that supplied the army of Italy, and by recruiting in Piedmont, Tuscany, Provence, and Dauphiné, he had succeeded in raising 50,000 soldiers, instead of 80,000, for which he had received orders.

Of these he had formed six divisions of infantry and one of cavalry. The soldiers were young, but the officers were experienced, and with their assistance he had endeavoured to keep the Drave and the Save from Willach to Laybach, covering the Tyrol with his left wing, and Carniola with his right. After having maintained this extensive line of operations during the months of August, September, and October, constantly expecting the Neapolitans, who never came, he had seen the Austrians present themselves in masses in the passes of Carinthia, he had seen his army dwindle down through the desertion of the Croats and the Italians, and he had successively fallen back, first upon the Isonzo, and afterwards on the Tagliamento. The defection of Bavaria, by opening all the passages of the Tyrol upon his left, had rendered his position still more difficult, and in his anxiety to cover at the same time Verona and Trieste, he had divided his army into two bodies. He had sent General Grenier to Bassano with 15,000 men, while he endeavoured with 20,000, by manœuvring between the Tagliamento and the Piave, to cover Friuli and Venice. It was the studying General Bonaparte's campaigns that inspired him with the idea of sending General Grenier into the valley of Bassano, for in rendering through this valley the general might throw himself upon the Austrian flank, while General Gifflenga tried with some thousand men to oppose them in front between Trento and Roveredo. But it avails little to borrow the ideas of great captains, if we cannot at the same time possess ourselves of their precision and energy in execution. Thus General Grenier lost most precious time wandering uselessly about; and Prince Eugène, who had at his disposal not more than 20,000 men to resist the Austrian column coming from Laybach, was afraid of being thrown back upon the Adige—that is to say, behind the entrance to the valley of Bassano, which would have separated him from General Grenier. He then recalled the latter, in order to retire finally to Verona. He had thus abandoned to the Austrians Carniola, Friuli, the Italian Tyrol, and only kept the fortresses, that is to say, Osopo, Palma-Nova, and Venice. The necessity of leaving garrisons in these important fortresses, and the desertion of the troops, had reduced his army to 36,000 fighting men, whilst the adverse generals, Hiller

and Bellegarde, had 60,000 at their disposal, independent of the Tyrolean insurgents.

Once established on the Adige, Prince Eugène again took heart, and attacking the Austrians, sometimes on his left towards Roveredo, sometimes in front towards Caldiero, he killed or captured 7000 or 8000 in various engagements. He had thus succeeded in inspiring his adversaries with a certain amount of respect; but he had in his rear Italy, that had fallen away from us, in consequence of the sufferings entailed by the war, and whom the priests and the English were exciting to revolt, and whom Murat did not endeavour to win back to us. All these circumstances presented difficulties which rendered it doubtful whether Prince Eugène could maintain his position. He could only answer for his own fidelity, simply, alas! for his own. The desolating intelligence from Leipsic had confounded and thoroughly shaken the different courts of Italy, though they were all of French origin. As to Prince Eugène, the husband, as we have seen, of a Bavarian princess, his father-in-law had sent an officer to inform him of the imperative reasons that had detached Bavaria from France, and to offer him an Italian principality if he consented to abandon the cause of Napoleon. Prince Eugène, overwhelmed with grief in thinking of his wife and children, whom he loved, and whom he feared soon to see deprived of everything, replied that being indebted to Napoleon for the position he held, he could not think of abandoning him, that he should soon, perhaps, be obliged to seek an asylum at Munich, but he was certain the King of Bavaria would rather receive a son-in-law deprived of a crown than lost to honour. Prince Eugène, after this noble reply, contented himself with communicating to Napoleon an exact account of the interview.

The close of the year 1813 had been still more disastrous in Spain than in Italy. We must remember that Napoleon, immediately after the battle of Vittoria, being exceedingly irritated against his brother Joseph and Marshal Jourdan, had despatched Marshal Soult to Spain, to re-establish our affairs there, and to render his authority more impressive, had conferred on him the rank of imperial lieutenant. Marshal Soult, whose quarrels with King Joseph we have not forgotten, returning armed with power to order the arrest of this prince if he resisted, had felt a vainglorious satisfaction, which, unfortunately for our cause, he was doomed soon to expiate. In an order of the day, insulting alike to Joseph and to Marshal Jourdan, he had imputed our misfortune in Spain, not to circumstances, but to the incapacity and cowardice of those who had preceded him in authority, not foreseeing that he thus deprived himself of every excuse in the circumstances in which

he was soon after placed. He had immediately entered on the duties of his office, and turned his attention to the reorganisation of the army. Instead of allowing it to be portioned out into the army of Andalusia, the army of the centre, the army of Portugal, and the Nord, an arrangement that presented serious inconveniences, Marshal Soult distributed the army into simple divisions, commanded by excellent generals, of whom there was a large number in the army of Spain. The organisation of this army had been originally so good that it had withstood every reverse. After having distributed the army into ten divisions, of which one was a body of reserve, he confided the command of the right to General Reille; he gave the centre to General Count d'Erlon, and the left to General Clausel. The latter, after the battle of Vittoria, having succeeded by a miracle of courage in reaching Saragossa, had entered France by Jaca, and had just joined Soult with 15,000 men. This movement had certainly the disadvantage of leaving Saragossa unprotected, but it possessed the advantage of concentrating our forces against the English, who were our most formidable enemies in Spain, and it was natural to expect some favourable result from the judicious employment of these troops. The army in Spain, in respect to military qualification, was unrivalled, especially since the losses we had experienced in Russia and in Germany. They were the bravest soldiers, the most warlike, the most inured to fatigue, that could then be found in Europe. But they were at the same time irritated, disgusted at seeing themselves during six years victimised, not alone to the carrying out of a disastrous enterprise, but to the incapacity and rivalry of their commanders. With immense confidence in themselves, the soldiers had none in their generals, with the exception of Reille and Clausel, and they consequently expected nothing but defeat. This want of confidence in their commanders completely destroyed the spirit of discipline which had been already considerably weakened by want and privation. Long unaccustomed to having food provided for them, and living solely on what they tore from a population they hated, and by whom they were hated, they looked upon themselves as masters of everything within their reach, and even if they returned to France, it was not probable they would change their mode of thinking, if they did not alter their manner of living. Covered with rags, embrowned by exposure to the sun, discontented, arrogant, commanded by officers in a still more lamentable plight, and who dared not show their ragged garments, they presented the most heart-rending of melancholy spectacles, that of brave soldiers struggling with vice and want. A great general who could have obtained a mastery over their minds, and led them again to

victory, might have rendered them the greatest army in the world.

Napoleon, for fear of disorganising the only provinces in Spain where the war had not proved disastrous, did not wish to withdraw Marshal Suchet from Aragon, and for the reasons we have already mentioned he chose Soult. This marshal, who had acquired great military fame, less, certainly, in Spain, where he had already served, than elsewhere, was not received by the Army with unqualified confidence. However, he was capable of repairing much of the mischief that had been done. He had to do with a formidable enemy, we mean the Anglo-Portuguese army, reckoning 45,000 English and 15,000 Portuguese, elated with victory; and in addition to these, 30,000 or 40,000 Spaniards, the best soldiers in Spain. It was certainly possible with 70,000 French to make head against this army, numerically greater than ours, but much inferior in quality, with the exception of the English.

Lord Wellington, even after the battle of Vittoria, hesitated to penetrate into France, so he besieged St. Sebastian and Pampeluna, rather to find a pretext for temporising than to obtain possession of these two posts, which were scarcely worth the trouble of a siege. To protect this twofold enterprise against the reprisals of the French, he had distributed his army with considerable ability, and surmounted, as much as possible, local difficulties. St. Sebastian, as is well known, is situate on the borders of the sea, nearly at the mouth of the Bidassoa, and at the extremity of the valley of Bastan. Pampeluna, on the contrary, the capital of Navarre, is situate on the opposite side of the valley, and in the basin of the Ebro. Lord Wellington had confided the siege of St. Sebastian to the Spanish army of Freyre, assisted by one Portuguese and two English divisions. These troops were, of course, posted near the sea, at the extremity of the valley of Bastan. There were in the neighbourhood of St. Estevan, about the centre of the valley of Bastan, three English divisions, ready to make a descent on St. Sebastian, or to march through the valley, and throw themselves on Navarre, thus aiding the other three English divisions that were covering the siege of Pampeluna, which was confided to the Spanish troops under General Morillo. With such a distribution of his forces, the English general thought himself tolerably well prepared to meet events, whatever turn they might take. Had he, however, been attacked with promptness and secrecy, it is by no means certain that he could have defended himself on every side. Aware of this, he was not without uneasiness, and guarded his position with extreme vigilance.

The French army was distributed in the valley of Saint Jean-



Pied-de-Port, which serves as a basin to the Nive, and runs to the sea in a direction almost parallel to the valley of Bastan. Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port, which encloses the famous defile of Roncevaux, is the most important place on the upper basin of the Nive, as Bayonne, situate at the confluence of the Nive and the Adour, is the principal point en route to the sea. A body of troops might with pretty equal chance of success debouch by this valley, and throw themselves either on the column that was besieging St. Sebastian, or on that which was besieging Pampeluna, always bearing in mind that they should act so as to prevent the concentration of the adverse forces. There were some reasons, however, in favour of an attack on St. Sebastian. In the first place, St. Sebastian was more closely pressed; then the road thither was short and good, the journey could be made direct through Yrun; whilst that to reach Pampeluna, it would be necessary to traverse the entire valley of Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port, and pass through the defile of Roncevaux. Both plans presented pretty much the same amount of facility, but to succeed in the execution of either, precision and celerity would be needed to drive back from French soil the enemy just ready to plant his foot upon it.

On the 24th July, Marshal Soult marched forth, at the head of almost his entire army, leaving General Villatte, with the body of reserve, in advance of Bayonne, and bringing with him about eighty pieces of cannon, taken from the arsenal of Bayonne, and drawn by horses, saved from the disaster of Vittoria. On the 25th he had debouched in the upper valley of the Bastan with General d'Erlon's corps, and in the valley of Roncevaux with the corps of Generals Reille and Clausel. The latter had found little difficulty in driving back to Pampeluna the Portuguese and two English divisions that defended the entrance to Navarre. But the Count d'Erlon, to reach the Bastan, had encountered considerable opposition from General Hill in forcing the Col de Moya. He had, however, succeeded with a loss of 2000 men, the enemy losing on that occasion 3000. All would have been well if on the following day (the 26th) the Count d'Erlon had been able quickly to rejoin our right, commanded by Generals Reille and Clausel. But the entire of the 26th was lost in rallying the troops, which proves that a grave error had been committed by the commanders, in not debouching simultaneously by the valley of Roncevaux, in order to fall suddenly on the English divisions, scattered in front of Navarre. When on the morning of the 27th, Count d'Erlon joined Clausel and Reille, the English were already in a strong position in front of Pampeluna. Their forces consisted of four divisions, two English, one Portuguese, and one Spanish; the situation was precisely one of those where we

had always attacked at a disadvantage. Moreover, the enemy was about to be strengthened by two divisions, hastening by forced marches from the valley of Bastan. In fact, Lord Wellington, having on the night of the 25th learned our approach, turned to profit the entire of the 26th, which we had lost, and brought up his forces from Bastan to Navarre. Even whilst awaiting the expected divisions, the English commander had four perfectly fit for action. General Clausel, whose precision of glance in estimating the strength of a position equalled his energy in action, was averse to attacking the English in front, but recommended that the position should be turned by making an attack on Pampeluna. General Soult not coinciding in his opinion, a strong position was attacked in front, and we had the same fortune there as at Vimiera, Talavera, Albuera, and Salamanca. We killed a large number of the enemy, we lost as many ourselves, and we remained at the foot of the position without having carried it. The combat was renewed on the 28th, but without greater success, for the English had been reinforced in the meantime. On the 29th our troops were obliged to return from Navarre into France, after having lost from 11,000 to 12,000 men, and killed or wounded 12,000 of the enemy in the space of four days. But these losses were much more severe for us than for Lord Wellington. We had exhausted our resources, whilst his were yet in good condition. Our troops had displayed greater valour than ever, and if they had not triumphed, they were not disappointed in their hopes, for they had long since ceased to expect anything either from the ability of their leaders or the kind favours of fortune. The soldiers soon resumed their habits of indiscipline, and sentiments of contempt for their generals; they were in part disbanded, and living at the expense of the French peasants. In this manner, desertion soon equalised the losses on both sides, and each army reckoned from 13,000 to 14,000 men less in the ranks. Unfortunately, the efforts made at the two sieges had produced little result, and Lord Wellington, confining himself to the investiture of Pampeluna, had turned his principal efforts towards St. Sebastian, where the French general Rey supported, with the aid of 2500 men, a memorable siege. Three times had he repulsed the English at the mouth of the breach, after having caused them enormous losses.

Although repulsed, the army, touched by the heroism of the garrison of St. Sebastian, wished to assist them, and Marshal Soult having returned to Bayonne, made an attempt to aid this brave garrison, which supported so nobly the honour of the French arms. He had passed the Bidassoa and attacked the heights of St. Martial, defended by the Spanish army and two English divisions. The result of this battle was the same as

that of all those where we had engaged the English in a defensible position. We caused them great losses, equal or superior to our own, thanks to the valour of our soldiers; but we were obliged to repass the Bidassoa, then swollen with rain, and on the 8th of September we saw the garrison of St. Sebastian surrender, after one of the most noble defences recorded in history. Happily for us the siege of Pampeluna furnished Lord Wellington sufficient reason for not entering France, at least immediately. Marshal Soult, with an army reduced from 70,000 to only a little more than 50,000 men, had established his left wing on the Nive, round Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port, whilst with his right wing he occupied the banks of the Bidassoa. His left wing being in a valley, his centre and his right in another, there was in his line of operations a lengthened elevation, and here the strength of the position was doubtful. To alter this state of things he would have been obliged to abandon a portion of the French territory, and it was natural to suppose he would hesitate before making such a sacrifice.

In this manner were passed the summer and the commencement of autumn on the Bidassoa. On his side, Marshal Suchet had resolved, on learning the disaster of Vittoria, to evacuate the kingdom of Valencia, though the sacrifice was a painful one. It certainly would have been better not to imitate the error committed at Dantzic, Stettin, Hamburg, Magdeburg, and Dresden, but rather abandon the possession of the most important places, than that a general should leave in his rear garrisons that he could not assist, and whose absence diminished considerably the efficiency of our armies. But the reiterated instructions of the war minister, founded on the value that was attached to keeping possession of the Mediterranean shores, had induced the marshal to leave garrisons in a great number of places. He had left 12,000 men at Lagonta, 400 in each of the forts of Denia, Peniscola, and Morella; 4000 at Tortosa, 1000 at Mequinenza, 4000 at Lerida, the same number at Tarragona, with money, provisions, ammunition, good officers—in a word, every means of defence for a year. After having deprived himself of these detachments, he had returned to Aragon at the head of only 25,000 soldiers, but men in the vigour of health, well dressed, well fed, regretted everywhere by the people through whose territory they passed, and whom they had spared the horrors attendant on war. Marshal Suchet had at first wished to fall back on Saragossa, but Mina having seized it since the departure of General Clausel, he had been obliged to retire to Barcelona, and to abandon Aragon, in order to defend Catalonia against the Anglo-Sicilian army, which did not amount to less than 50,000 men. Judging that the garrison of Tarragona was not in a condition to make an effective defence,

Marshal Suchet had for a moment resumed offensive operations, put the enemy to flight, reached Tarragona, blew up the works, and brought the garrison away, so that he now only left in his rear the garrisons of Sagonta, Tortosa, Mequinenza, Lerida, Peniscola, Morella, and Denia. It was quite enough in the existing state of European affairs! Not wishing to allow the enemy to attain a too decisive advantage, he attacked them anew at the Col d'Ordal, and after a most brilliant engagement, had forced the English to retire to the seashore.

The events of the summer and autumn had thus been somewhat less disastrous in this part of the Peninsula than in the other, but if there and elsewhere the fortresses had been evacuated, we might have assembled a noble army of at least 40,000 men, amply provided with every necessary, and led by a chief who possessed the entire confidence of the soldiers; such an army would have contributed to defend our frontiers victoriously. Unfortunately, in the south as in the north, the vain hope of quickly recovering a chimerical grandeur had perverted the judgment of Napoleon, and deprived France of those resources which would have powerfully aided to avert her misfortunes.

Marshal Soult, in quest of fresh combinations, would willingly have made use of the army of Aragon to make some important move against Lord Wellington. He at one time wished that Marshal Suchet, traversing Catalonia and Aragon, would join him by passing through Lerida, Saragossa, Tudela, and Pampeluna, with about 25,000 men. At another time Marshal Soult expressed a wish that Suchet, making an immense detour through Perpignan, Toulouse, and Bayonne, should join him to debouch en masse against the English. The former of these plans exposed Marshal Suchet to the risk attendant on a march of more than one hundred leagues, between the Anglo-Sicilian army, which amounted to 70,000 men, including the Catalonians, and the army of Lord Wellington, which reckoned 100,000 soldiers—that is to say, Marshal Suchet would be exposed to the danger of being overwhelmed by these combined forces, or of being thrust back into Spain, where he would have been, so to speak, cast into an abyss. The second plan, by condemning him to a journey of one hundred and fifty leagues through France, would abandon all the fortresses in Catalonia and on the frontiers of Rousillon to the Anglo-Sicilian army, and this risk was to be incurred for a doubtful advantage, for it was by no means certain that Marshal Soult, not having been able to conquer the English with 70,000 men, would succeed in doing so with 90,000; his army not having been deficient on the former occasions in numerical strength. Each of these projects had been pronounced impracticable, and it was only the

termination of the war in Spain which, in putting an end to the alliance between the English and the Spaniards, could rid us of both; excepting, indeed, that the English might, at a later period, appear off our coasts. At length, on the 7th of October, Marshal Soult's right wing having been surprised at Andaye, he had lost 2400 men, and had been obliged to make to the enemy the first concession they had received of French territory. Pampluna had opened its gates on the 31st, and Lord Wellington, having no motive to pause on the frontiers, had been led, almost in spite of himself, to cross.

The situation of our armies was then disheartening on every side. On the Rhine we had 50,000 or 60,000 men worn out from fatigue, followed by an equal number of stragglers and invalids, and having to contend with 300,000 men of the European coalition; in Italy we had 36,000 men in juxtaposition on the Adige with 60,000 Austrians, and burdened with the difficult task of holding Italy in check, that was weary of our rule, and of restraining Murat, who was ready to abandon us; on the frontier of Spain we had 50,000 veterans, disheartened by misfortune, scarcely able to hold the Western Pyrenees against 100,000 victorious soldiers under Lord Wellington; and on this same frontier we had 25,000 more old veterans, in excellent condition certainly, but called upon to defend the Eastern Pyrenees against more than 70,000 English, Sicilians, and Catalonians. Such was the exact position of our affairs, numerically noted down. Napoleon had, it is true, proved a hundred times with what prodigious rapidity he could create resources, but he had never before found himself in such distress. More than 140,000 of our best troops were dispersed in different European fortresses; there remained in France only deserted *dépôts*, which even in 1813 had made an effort to drill raw recruits in two or three months, and had sent them forth, officered by the few experienced men they still possessed. Undoubtedly there were still in the regiments that returned to France experienced soldiers and officers, but the authorities were now about to send to them recruits, ill dressed, ill drilled, in order that these old soldiers might do for the recruits what the *dépôts* had neither time nor capability to effect; in fact, they were to be constrained to employ in instructing these conscripts the time they would have needed for repose, if the enemy had left them leisure for any. Our fortresses, which would have served as a support to the army, were, as we have said, stripped of all means of defence. Sending an immense amount of war matériel beyond the frontiers had deprived our home fortresses of indispensable necessities. We had sent to Magdeburg and to Hamburg what was wanted at Strasburg and Metz, and to Alexandria what would have been needed at Grenoble. Even a part of the

Lille artillery was still at the camp of Boulogne. But it was not alone the matériel of war in which we were deficient. Our engineer officers, so numerous, so skilful, so brave, were scattered through more than a hundred foreign cities. We had hardly time to form some cohorts of national guards to hasten to Strasbourg, to Landau, to Metz, to Lille. Thus, in order to conquer the world, which was now escaping from her grasp, France had left herself defenceless. Our finances, formerly so prosperous, managed with admirable regularity, were now as exhausted as our armies, through the chimera of universal domination. The municipal lands seized to liquidate the debt of 1811 and 1812, and to supply the deficiency of 1813, had remained unsold. It was doubtful whether purchasers could be found for ten millions. The paper which represented the anticipated price sunk from 15 to 20 per cent., although nearly the entire of what had been issued was still in the coffers of the bank, and in those of the crown itself, which had taken more than seventy millions. The moral condition of the country was still more wretched, if possible, than the matériel. The soldiers, convinced of the folly of the policy for which they were pouring forth their blood, murmured aloud, though they were ever ready, in presence of the enemy, to sustain the national honour. The nation, deeply irritated that the victories of Lutzen and Bautzen had not been profited of to conclude a peace, looked upon themselves as sacrificed to a mad ambition, now that they had experienced the grave inconveniences of an irresponsible government. Disillusioned as to the genius of Napoleon, having never believed in his prudence, but having always had faith in his invincibility, they were at one and the same time disgusted with his government, doubtful of his military capability, and terrified at the approach of enemies who were advancing in masses; the French people, in a word, were morally broken down, at the very moment when, to avert the impending danger, they would have needed all the patriotic enthusiasm with which they were animated in 1792, or at least the confiding admiration with which the first consul had inspired them in 1800. Never, in short, was a people in a state of more profound dejection called upon to encounter a more imminent peril.

To a certainty, if the victorious foreigners, who suspected a part of these truths, had known them in their full extent, they would have paused on the banks of the Rhine only a single day, a sufficient time to provide ammunition and provisions, and would have crossed this river, which since 1795 had been regarded as an inviolable frontier; they would have marched straight to Paris, that city where, but a short while before, the Genius of Victory seemed to have taken up a permanent abode. But the allies, fatigued by their extraordinary efforts, even still

astonished at their success, notwithstanding the two campaigns that had terminated to their advantage, felt disposed to pause on the banks of the Rhine. It was the last respite that fortune seemed willing to grant ere she abandoned us for ever.

More than one cause contributed to the mode of conduct then adopted by the allies, but the glory acquired by the French nation was the determining motive. If the policy of Napoleon had raised the civilised world against him, the glory he had shed over the French people, the unexampled bravery with which we had supported his gigantic enterprises, the recollection of how the French nation had risen to a man in 1792 to repulse the aggression of all Europe, furnished a motive of reflection to the continental powers, who had most at stake in a contest with France. They hated us intensely, but they feared us quite as much. The idea of crossing the Rhine, and of braving within their own realm this people who had inundated all Europe with their victorious armies, amongst whom there was not a man who had not borne arms, and where each individual might indeed blame the ambition of his chief, but who would in all probability support him, with might and main, if the enemy, having touched the frontiers of France, should attempt to cross. These considerations disturbed, intimidated the most experienced of the allied ministers and generals. Besides, after having expelled Napoleon from Germany, what more was there to desire? Would it be wise after an unexpected triumph to tempt fortune again, to fail, perhaps, in a rash enterprise, to be repulsed beyond the Rhine, and all for want of having had the prudence to pause at that point? This would render Napoleon more exacting than ever, and awaken in him pretensions that were nearly extinct, and would condemn the allies to an endless war, because they had not the good sense to make peace at the proper time, acting in this respect as unwisely as Napoleon had done at Prague. And then, had not the war already been sufficiently desolating? There was not an army in Europe that did not bear about with them strong testimony of how deeply they had suffered, not alone at Moscow, Lutzen, Bautzen, and Dresden, where they had been conquered, but at Katzbach, Gross-Beeren, Kulm, Dennewitz, and Leipsic, where they had been victorious. With the exception of the Prussians, amongst whom there prevailed a sort of national *furor*, excited by the influence of secret societies, the desire of peace was general amongst the military men of all nations. Though very brave and proud of their success, the Russians had not wished to cross the Oder, they were still more unwilling to cross the Rhine; they thought they had done quite enough in fighting their way from Moscow to Mayence, and that they really had no interest in going further.

The Austrians, who had been fighting two and twenty years, and who had ejected from Austria and Germany the conqueror of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram, were desirous of rest. They saw in the prolongation of the war only a means of satisfying the hatred of Prussia, and of increasing the influence of the Russians and English, with, at the same time, the risk of a general defeat. They were therefore strongly inclined to peace, which it now seemed probable could be made on a permanent basis. At the head of the military men most anxious for peace was Prince Schwarzenberg. He was tired of the violence of the Prussians, the airs of superiority assumed by the Russians, and the obstinacy of the English, and had spoken strongly in favour of peace, and in the camp of the allies no one opposed the soundness of his arguments. And what was very extraordinary, the celebrated English commander Lord Wellington, who was the first in Europe that gave a check to Napoleon's power, and whose fame was constantly increasing, even he seemed to hesitate on approaching the formidable frontiers of France. And yet he could not be reproached with timidity, for in 1810 and in 1811 he had remained alone in arms on the continent, running at every moment the risk of being pushed into the ocean by the army of France. Even after the decisive battle of Vittoria, which had taken place at our very threshold, Lord Wellington had not advanced a step, and in reply to the urgent commands of his government, he said that a general ought to reflect seriously before placing his foot on the burning soil of France. Alas! our enemies, who had so often misunderstood us, and who were doomed to misunderstand us again, flattered us still. They were not aware that a long misuse of our national strength had exhausted our resources, and that disgusted with a prolonged despotism, and indignant with a licentious ambition, the people of France had become isolated from the government, and were inclined to look upon the war as a matter interesting to the legislators exclusively, but in which the people had no direct interest. The error into which our enemies had fallen was not fated to be of long duration, but it was very general; they paid us the homage of trembling at the idea of putting a foot on French soil.

This pacific disposition, observable amongst the military world, with the exception of the Prussians, was less prevalent amongst the statesmen of the coalition, if we except M. de Metternich. This sagacious minister, who in 1813 had displayed a rare combination of tact and frankness, of determination and of prudence, shrunk from the idea of exposing the fortunes of Austria to fresh risks, and in this respect, as in many others, was entirely of the same opinion, as his master.



M. de Metternich and the Emperor Francis had decided on war, because Germany called loudly for it, because the opportunity of re-establishing the affairs of Austria and of saving the independence of Germany was too glorious not to be profited of; but having attained their object, they did not wish, in attempting to win back all the former glory of Austria, to incur the risk of losing what they had already gained, and at the same time run the chance of increasing beyond measure Russian preponderance in Europe, Russian preponderance in Germany, and English preponderance on the seas. Austria, certain of no longer having the Grand Duchy of Warsaw on her northern frontiers, and assured of recovering all she had been deprived of in Poland to constitute this duchy, and of regaining the frontier of the Inn, Tyrol, Illyria, and part of Friuli, and of no longer being obliged to maintain the Confederation of the Rhine, ought to consider, and did consider, herself perfectly satisfied. The Emperor Francis, constant in adversity and moderate in prosperity, was decidedly of this opinion, and M. de Metternich, the faithful interpreter of his thoughts, coincided with him entirely. As to the rest, the marriage of Marie Louise, concocted solely for the interests of the empire, added very little to these excellent reasons. But if the allies passed the Rhine, a question immediately arose, which had not yet presented itself to the minds of any but a few inconsolable old men, whose regrets had lately been converted into sanguine hopes, and this question was nothing less than the total overthrow of Napoleon himself. To resist his intolerable rule, to restrain, if possible, his excessive ambition, had been at first the desire of all his enemies; to hurl him from the throne of France had never entered into anybody's mind. However, to conquer a man whose title to consideration was based solely on his victories, and after having conquered him in Russia, in Poland, in Germany, to conquer him perhaps in France itself, if the attempt were made—such a series of victories might naturally awaken the idea of attacking his person, and depriving him by the sword of a crown gained by the sword. The bare idea of such a possibility threw the Prussians into ecstasies of joy, and stirred the peaceful and calm-beating heart of Frederick William. As for Alexander, whom Napoleon had personally humiliated, he had never dreamed of so splendid a vengeance, but presented by circumstances, he did not reject it; on the contrary, his most ardent wish was to enjoy such a revenge in its fullest extent. But supposing the object attained, what was to become of the throne of France, thus rendered vacant? The Prussians cared little about that, provided they could hurl from the pinnacle of his grandeur him who so often had trampled

them under foot, and Alexander was equally indifferent to consequences if he could only be revenged for the contumelious contempt he had experienced from the haughty conqueror. But hatred blinded neither the Emperor Francis nor his minister; they were guided solely by a regard for the interests of Austria, and they asked themselves the question, If the allies crossed the Rhine, what would they do on the other side?

As to Napoleon's being married to Marie Louise, although the Emperor Francis was not a bad father, that circumstance touched him and his minister very slightly. They were influenced by very different feelings. No power in the world had suffered so much as Austria from the spirit of innovation, or had struggled so vigorously against it during three centuries. In the 18th century she had encountered the great Frederick, and had lost Silesia. During the French Revolution she had encountered Napoleon, and lost the Low Countries, Swabia, Italy, and the Germanic crown. If we go back even to the time of the Protestant Reformation, we find her, under Charles V., struggling against Luther, that is to say, against the spirit of innovation. An abhorrence of revolutions was a hereditary policy of Austria's, suspended perhaps during a short interval under Joseph II., but soon resumed by his successors, and as active as far-sighted under Francis II. and M. de Metternich. They therefore asked each other, with an anxiety unshared by any of the allies, to whom should they confide the government of this stormy France that held in her hand, not alone the terrible sword of war, but the not less destructive torch of revolution. As to the Bourbons, who would have suited them in many respects, they scarcely thought of them, because that France and Europe thought still less of them, and besides, the capability of the Bourbons was doubtful. It did not appear either to the emperor or his minister easy to replace a soldier of genius, who was willing to repress the spirit of revolution, from which he had himself arisen, not through prejudice, because he entertained none, but through the twofold love of order and of power; thinking, then, less of the interests of Marie Louise than of the dangers of a French revolution, ready to burst forth again in all its horrors, the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich were not at all inclined to dethrone Napoleon.

Satisfied with the obtained results, and fearing rather than desiring the vacancy of the French throne, the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich decided, that once arrived at the banks of the Rhine, it would be better to make Napoleon fresh offers of peace; and a most unexpected circumstance, England, the persevering enemy of the Bonaparte family, acquiesced in the views entertained by the cabinet of Vienna. The British cabinet having formerly loudly proclaimed their desire of rein-

stating the Bourbons on the throne of France, having suffered on this account during twenty years the attack of the opposition, by whom they were reproached with carrying on a ruinous war in which the interests of England were noways involved; the English ministers at length seemed to fear this reproach, and by dint of defending themselves, in the end, ceased to merit the accusation. Lord Aberdeen, the British representative at the court of the allies, one of the most upright and enlightened ministers that England ever possessed, he, too, was of M. de Metternich's opinion, and did not hesitate to say that if Napoleon made the necessary concessions it would be better to come to terms, and treat him in all respects as a perfectly legitimate sovereign.

Once arrived on the banks of the Rhine, the allies were obliged to come to some resolution on this point. In fact, certain antecedents necessitated them to do so. M. de Metternich on the very morrow of Austria's coalition with the belligerent powers, and whilst all were still in Bohemia, even then M. de Metternich had proposed and obtained the general sanction to some important resolutions, all drawn up with the view of obviating the effects of that spirit of discord which usually prevails in coalitions. In the first place, as the sovereigns and their principal ministers were assembled, he proposed that they should not separate until the war should be terminated. Secondly, he had asked and obtained the nomination of a commander-in-chief, who, as we have seen, was the Prince de Schwarzenberg. Thirdly, he had proposed as the object for which the war was to be carried on, not conquest, but the restitution to each sovereign of what he had lost. Now this proposition might give rise to great uncertainty in the case of Prussia and Austria, both of which had during the past twenty years undergone such numerous transformations; but to obviate these complications, the Austrian minister had specified that the condition in which Austria and Prussia actually were before the war of 1805 should be regarded as their normal state, and it was, moreover, decided that the reconquered provinces should be placed as pledges in the hands of the allies. Lastly, M. de Metternich had induced the sovereigns to consent that the war should not be reckoned by campaigns or by years, but by periods measured by the importance of the results obtained. Thus the progress to the Rhine and the arrival of the army there was to constitute the first period. The second, if they were constrained to undertake it, should terminate at the heights of the Vosges and the Ardennes. The third period, if they were absolutely compelled to carry the war so far, should finish only in Paris itself. The consequence of these profoundly thoughtful resolutions was, that without reverting to the motive,

the allies, as each period terminated, paused before commencing the next, to examine deliberately whether peace might not be possible.

Thus influenced by all the reasons we adduced, Austria, without being at all anxious to take the initiative in fresh negotiations, was still desirous of letting Napoleon know that this was the moment to treat; she wished to advise him to act more wisely than he had done at Prague, and to endeavour, moreover, to conserve a throne whose security had not hitherto been questioned, but which might soon become doubtful; she wished to counsel him to guard carefully the fair territory of France, and to limit his ambition within the frontier laid down by the treaty of Luneville. The allied sovereigns and their ministers being at that moment assembled at Frankfort, chance furnished them an opportunity of communicating their opinion to Napoleon, an opinion at that time perfectly sincere, for they had not then crossed the Rhine.

M. de St. Aignan had been formerly French minister at Weimar. This gentleman combined with an enlightened intellect a mild and conciliating temper; he possessed, moreover, the advantages, at that time highly esteemed, of being the brother-in-law of M. de Caulaincourt, and it was well known throughout Europe that M. de Caulaincourt was the only person in the court of France, then so subservient to the will of Napoleon, who had the wisdom to uphold a peace policy; and this fact, added to the important position he held, rendered him in the eyes of Europe one of the most respectable ministers of the French empire. His brother-in-law had been, by a forced interpretation of the rights of war, looked upon as a prisoner when the allies entered Weimar. He had been first banished to Töplitz, but afterwards recalled to Frankfort, where he was indemnified by every mark of personal respect for a temporary annoyance. He was asked to undertake a mission to Paris, for the purpose of suggesting to Napoleon the idea of a congress, which should assemble immediately on the frontiers, and treat of peace upon the double basis of the natural limits of France, and a complete independence for all nations.

M. de Metternich was the first who made a confidential communication to M. de St. Aignan touching the nature of this mission. He assured him that Europe was desirous of peace, that she wished it upon honourable terms, and such as every nation in Europe might accept; that she was well aware that, after twenty years of successive victories, France had acquired the right to be respected, and she should enjoy her privilege; that it was not the intention of the allies to try to re-establish the ancient order of things; that Austria did not

seek to recover all she had formerly possessed; she would be satisfied to take a suitable and secure position. This was the limit of the pretensions made by the allied princes; and in proof of the sincerity of their intentions, M. de Metternich was commissioned to propose that France should be limited to her natural boundaries, that is to say, the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and nothing beyond. He added besides, that it was time for all parties to think of peace, and for France not less than for the rest of Europe; and for Napoleon in particular, more than for any of the belligerent parties, for he had raised up against him a fearful tempest, and the personal irritation he had excited was constantly increasing; that it inspired the combatants with a warlike rage it was difficult to repress; that if he reflected wisely he would see that the sentiments that agitated Europe had penetrated into France itself, and it might happen that he should soon find himself as friendless in his own country as he was in the rest of the world; that the time for entering into an honourable treaty was come, but if the propitious moment were allowed to pass, the war would become intense, implacable, and without hope of cessation until either the one party or the other should be destroyed. Besides, the allied sovereigns would not separate, they would in common make every necessary sacrifice; their offers of peace were sincere, and they wished peace to be universal by land and sea; Russia, Prussia, England herself wished it. It was now necessary to lay all distrust aside, for the desire to stay the effusion of blood was universal; but it would be well not to fall again into the deplorable error committed at Prague, where in consequence of not believing in Austria, and of not coming to a determination in time, France lost an opportunity of making peace on terms that she could never hope to obtain again. To confirm what he said, M. de Metternich introduced successively M. de Nesselrode and Lord Aberdeen, who repeated in the most succinct but decided terms all that the Austrian minister had said. Lord Aberdeen affirmed, in the name of the British cabinet, that they did not wish either to degrade or humiliate France; that they had no intention of disputing her natural frontiers, for they knew there were certain events to which it was better not to revert; but he repeated that beyond these limits they were decided not to yield to France either territory, or actual authority, nor even influence, with the exception of what all the great powers exercised on one another, when they were content to make use of the advantages of their position without abusing them.

Influenced by all he had seen and heard, M. de St. Aignan did not entertain the slightest doubt of the sincerity of this language. He replied that taken by surprise, and not having

any positive mission, he could listen to everything without disobeying instructions that he had never received, but he would report exactly what he had been commissioned to say. He, however, thought it better for the sake of correctness that he should be furnished with a written recapitulation of the proposed conditions. M. de Metternich saw no difficulty in the matter, and remitted to M. de St. Aignan a short but concise note containing the following enunciations.

"The allied sovereigns will not separate, but will remain united, whatever may happen, until peace is concluded. This peace must be general, and prevail on the sea as well as on land. It must be founded on the principle of the independence of every nation within its limits, either natural or historical. The Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees will mark the frontiers of France, but she must confine herself within these limits; Holland is to be independent, and her frontiers on the French side shall be afterwards determined; Italy also must be independent, and her Austrian frontiers on the Friuli, as well as her French frontiers on the Piedmontese borders, will be a question of future consideration. The Bourbon dynasty must be restored in Spain." (This condition was a *sine qua non*.)

England also was to make restitution beyond the seas, and each nation was to enjoy an entire freedom of trade as should be laid down according to the laws of nations, &c. On this last point alone Lord Aberdeen raised some difficulties, but M. de Metternich, who acted as secretary, satisfied all parties by the use of those vague terms that we have reported. M. de St. Aignan immediately set out for Mayence, bearing with him the most affectionate messages for M. de Caulaincourt. The purport of these verbal missives was, that the allies believed him so honourable and so upright that they were content to accept him as arbiter of the conditions of peace if Napoleon would invest him with full powers for that purpose.

M. de St. Aignan arrived on the 11th November at Mayence, and on the 14th at Paris. He did not delay to communicate his mission to M. de Bassano, who immediately forwarded the communication to Napoleon. This minister was, it must be admitted, considerably changed. Of his former dangerous infatuation he now only preserved the exterior semblance. His disposition and turn of thought had yielded to the weight of events. He had consequently the wisdom to speak favourably to Napoleon of the propositions of Frankfort. They were certainly generous and advantageous! What could we, in fact, desire beyond the Alps and the Rhine? What had we gained by passing these strong and well-defined frontiers? Nothing but the hatred of other nations, the constant effusion of their blood and ours, with thrones for some of the emperor's family,

the greater number of which were at that moment overturned, or made instrumental to our injury, because that our government of neighbouring people had assumed the humiliating form of foreign rule; and if, in short, either through pride or fraternal affection the emperor absolutely demanded some territory beyond the Rhine or the Alps, did not the terms employed for fixing the limits of Holland and of Italy offer an opportunity of obtaining these family indemnifications?

There was not the slightest ground for refusing the indirect but positive propositions of Frankfort. In fact, Napoleon did not for a moment think of refusing, though his pride suffered severely, but he was now paying the penalty of his errors, for any concession was an admission of weakness. But not to accept instantly the propositions just arrived from Frankfort would be giving the allies an opportunity of withdrawing their offer when they should discover the destitution of France, the dispersion of her resources from Cadiz to Dantzic, her moral dejection, her estrangement from Napoleon; when especially the English people, elated by the accounts of the late successes of the allies, should learn these things, they would wish to push their advantage to the last extremity. This danger existed, and it was, in fact, the most serious; but there was another also; it was being obliged to avow himself, what the emperor feared the allies would soon guess, and betraying by too ready concessions the powerlessness to which he was reduced.

Compliance on the part of a person less obstinate than Napoleon might have appeared dictated by a spirit of conciliation, but for him to yield every point immediately, to fall unhesitatingly into the views of the allies, would be to acknowledge his utter distress. There, side by side with the danger of resisting, was the no less imminent peril of yielding; a not unfrequent consequence of erroneous conduct, which leads us into positions beset with difficulties, and where there is as much to be feared from drawing back as from advancing.

However, the greatest error would be to display a spirit of obstinacy by furnishing those who reluctantly made the propositions of Frankfort an excuse to withdraw their offers; it was better to consent to everything, and that immediately, than run the risk of exposing a secret which, after all, could not be long concealed. Napoleon wished by replying promptly to evince an eagerness to negotiate, and having only required the afternoon of the 15th for reflection, he sent his answer on the 16th. But the terms of the reply were not happily chosen. There was no allusion to the proposed bases of negotiation, consequently no acceptance of these bases. Manheim was mentioned as a place for the assembly of the future congress, a city whose locality indicated the intention of entering on

business without delay; in short, the reply contained ironical phrases, particularly bitter against England, apropos of the independence of nations, which France, it was remarked, demanded both by sea and land. Such was the substance of the reply, a reply which certainly was not delayed, for it was instantly despatched to Marshal Marmont, who commanded at Mayence, with orders to forward it at once to Frankfort. The silence observed by the emperor on the proposed conditions was without doubt a part of his policy, and intended to prevent the allies divining his reduced position; for this silence seemed to indicate that he was quite ready to accept every proposition; but it had the disadvantage of discouraging the allies if they were sincere, and if they were not so, it furnished them a plausible opportunity for withdrawing their offers.

When Napoleon arrived at Paris, he found the public there plunged in the most profound dejection, in fact almost in despair, but at the same time strongly excited against him. The police, however active they might be, or however arbitrary, could scarcely suppress the manifestation of this general feeling. Although nobody, not even a member of the government, was in the secret of the negotiations of Prague, although Napoleon had made his ministers, and even the Chancellor Cambacérès himself, believe that the allies had tried to humiliate him, even to the point of depriving him of Venice, which was not true, the public were convinced that if the negotiations had failed, it was through his fault. The French could not forgive him for having neglected the favourable opportunities for concluding peace which the victories of Lutzen and Bautzen afforded. They regarded his ambition as extravagant, cruel to the mass of mankind, and fatal to France. After the disasters of 1813, added to those of 1812, the French people did not think themselves in a position to resist the formidable coalition, which from the Rhine, the Adige, and the Pyrenees threatened France with the invasion of a million soldiers. The newspaper writers, either gagged or bribed, and whom no person believed, even when they did speak the truth, had received instructions from the Duke of Rovigo upon the manner in which they were to represent the disasters of this campaign. The frost had served as an explanation of the misfortunes of 1812; the defection of the allies was an excuse for the discomfitures of 1813. Besides these excuses, another was found in the unexpected explosion of the bridge of Leipsic. But for the criminal conduct of the Saxons and the Bavarians, exclaimed the apologists; but for the fault of the officer who blew up the bridge of Leipsic, Napoleon, after conquering the allies, would have returned to the Rhine, bearing with him to France the terms of an honour-



able peace. Then there was no term of execration that was not lavished on the Bavarians and still more on the Saxons. They also persisted in declaring that Colonel Montfort was to be tried by court-martial for the catastrophe of the bridge of Leipsic, though whatever such persons might say, Colonel Montfort was perfectly innocent. Nobody believed these assertions, and like liars, who when they perceive they are not believed raise their voices still higher, these bribed journalists repeated with more bitterness their appointed lesson, without obtaining more credence. "He wants to sacrifice all our children to his wild ambition," was the cry of every family from Paris even to the extremity of the most remote provinces. They did not deny the genius of Napoleon; they did worse, they did not think of it at all, in order to avoid remembering his passion for wars and conquests. The horror which the guillotine formerly inspired the French people they now felt at the prospect of war. The universal topic of conversation was the battlefields of Spain and Germany, the millions of dying, of wounded, and of sick expiring without attendance on the fields of Leipsic and Vittoria. They represented Napoleon as a kind of war demon, thirsting for blood, and happy only when surrounded by desolation and death. France, formerly disgusted with liberty after ten years of revolution, was now disgusted with despotism after fifteen years of military rule, and the effusion of human blood from one end of Europe to the other. The violence of the prefects in carrying off the children of the humbler classes as conscripts, and those of the higher classes to form guards of honour; worrying families whose sons did not respond to the summons by the demand for subsidies; employing movable columns against the malcontents who traversed the country; often treating French provinces as if they were portions of a conquered kingdom, converting into compulsory taxes the pretended voluntary gifts proposed and acceded to by their representatives; the seizure at one and the same time of goods, horses, cattle; a suspicious police, reporting the slightest observations, and arbitrarily imprisoning those who were accused of making them, and always suspected of being present even when they were not; a deep misery in the seaports, in consequence of the suspension of commerce; equal distress on the frontiers, across which our traffic formerly found a safe passage, but where a million foreign bayonets now intercepted the transport of a single bale of merchandise; in a word, an inexpressible and universal dread of invasion—all these evils, arising at the same time from the uncontrolled will of one individual, furnished a severe lesson, which effaced that of the Revolution, and which, without rendering France

republican, awakened a desire for a constitutional monarchy. All the old parties, which had almost sunk into oblivion, began again to revive. The revolutionists made some efforts, but it must be avowed, without effect. Some, but certainly not a numerous party, attached themselves to Napoleon through fear of the Bourbons, whom they hated; they wished to make him dictator, on condition that he would have recourse to extraordinary measures, and that he would call the people to a movement similar to that of 1792. But these were maniacs, dreaming of a past that could never be recalled. The movement of 1792 had been only a burst of indignation on the part of France when unjustly assailed by all Europe; but now the cases were reversed, and allied Europe experienced against France as strong a sentiment of indignation as France had formerly entertained against the rest of Europe. The royalists, partisans of the house of Bourbon, revived by hopes excited by the priests, now more daring and more numerous than the revolutionists, began to raise their voices and obtain an audience. France had almost forgotten the Bourbons, from whom she had been separated by events of such magnitude that they seemed to occupy the space of centuries in the public mind; she feared, besides, the Bourbon manner of thinking, their accessories, their resentments; but terrified at the further prospect of imperial government, and determinately repulsing republican rule, France began to think that the Bourbons, restrained by wise laws, might offer a means of escaping from despotism as well as from anarchy. As to the rest, it was only men of the highest order of mind that carried their views further. The mass of the people hailed the name of the Bourbons in order to stop the cry of war, which was devouring their children, increasing taxation, and paralysing commerce.

When a government begins to be in danger, an indubitable evidence may be found in the temper of mind displayed by the functionaries. In 1813 and 1814 the functionaries of the empire were low-spirited, dejected, discouraged; and though a certain number affected a violent zeal, the greater part, without avowing it, entertained as inimical a feeling towards Napoleon as his greatest enemies, because they felt that in compromising himself he had involved them all. But danger had infused somewhat of a spirit of independence into some of the higher functionaries. They told Napoleon at the close of 1812, and they repeated it to him at the end of 1813, that without peace all would be destroyed, they as well as he. Soldiers of the highest rank that he had loaded with gifts, but to whom he denied leisure to enjoy them, maintained a sullen silence, or said harshly that no resource remained but to carry on the war. Two most sensible men, one a soldier, the other a government

functionary, Berthier and Cambacérès, no longer concealed their consternation. Berthier fell ill; Cambacérès fell into a fit of devotion, which being utterly unlike any affection he had ever before manifested, was considered a visible consequence of profound dejection. Concealing his real opinion from Napoleon as from one he deemed incorrigible, he asked permission to retire, in order to finish his days in repose and piety. Some others, less resigned, had manifested their vexation more openly. Ney, it is said, had given vent to violent expressions; Marmont had presumed upon the liberty of an old acquaintance to offer some advice; Macdonald, with a rather uncouth mixture of craft and simplicity, had expressed his opinion; M. de Caulaincourt had given utterance to his with his accustomed courage, and a sort of respectful haughtiness. All were unanimous on one point—a desire for peace. And there was the empress, who, without giving an advice, for she did not know who was right or wrong, did nothing but weep. She feared for herself, for her son, even for Napoleon, whom she loved at that time, as a young woman loves the man she has married.

This idea of peace, which pursued him like a bitter reproach, annoyed Napoleon so much the more, because not having desired when it depended on himself to obtain it, he now felt that desiring he could no longer procure it, and that peace, so long repulsed, at last eluded his pursuit. Strange and fatal vengeance, evolved from our own misdeeds. Europe had certainly just offered with sincerity to resume negotiations, but that sincerity might be doubted by one who was not in the councils of the allies, and it was besides probable they would not persevere in the offer as soon as our weakness, which could not be long concealed, should become publicly known. Napoleon then had very little faith in the possibility of an acceptable peace, and only expected it from a last desperate struggle, kept up on our frontiers or beyond. This was why he addressed the following reply to all his censors, whether open or secret. "It is easy," said he to them, "to speak of peace, but it is not so easy to conclude it. Europe seems to offer peace, but she does not wish it sincerely. She has conceived the hope of destroying us, and this hope, once conceived, she will never abandon, unless we can make her feel the impossibility of success. You believe that it is by humiliating ourselves we shall disarm her; you are mistaken. The more yielding you are, the more exacting she will become, and from demand to demand she will lead you on to terms of peace that you could not accept. She offers you the line of the Rhine and the Alps, and even some part of Piedmont. These certainly are favourable conditions; but if you appear willing to accept, she will soon propose the frontiers of 1790. Well, can I accept them—I to

whom the natural frontiers have been transmitted by the Republic? There has been perhaps a moment when we ought to have shown ourselves more moderate, but in the actual state of things too manifest a yielding on our part would be an avowal of our distress that would render the prospect of peace more remote than ever. We must fight once more, fight desperately, and if we conquer, then we ought certainly to hasten to conclude peace, and in such a work, believe me, none will be more eager than I."

Unfortunately each moment added to the correctness of Napoleon's assertions, for Europe, learning gradually the full extent of our weakness, no longer thought of making any concession, and if we wished for peace now, we ought to be able to win it by force. But after having believed Napoleon too easily when he did not speak sincerely, the allies now refused to believe when what he said was only too true. They only saw in the language we have just quoted his obstinate temper, his insatiable passion for war (a passion that had once ruled him, but which had passed away for ever), and many persons who cared little whether the peace were honourable or not, whether France conserved or yielded her natural frontiers, provided the imperial throne was saved, and that they preserved their posts; such people said that *this man* (it was so they designated Napoleon), that *this man* was mad, that he was running to his own destruction, and would destroy them all at the same time. Thus the truth that Napoleon would not listen to, when it might have been profitably heard, now reappeared under the most painful forms, evidenced, not alone in the strong cry of the people, but in the affliction of faithful friends, in the sulky ill-humour of selfish adherents, and often even in the insolence of the vilest courtiers, from whose breasts despair at the loss of place had banished every feeling of respect.

When an erroneous opinion takes possession of the public mind, and this opinion is sure to be implacable because it is erroneous, it demands a victim. There was one in those days that all the power of Napoleon could not refuse, we will not say, to the public, that was condemned to silence, but to his own indignant courtiers, and this victim was M. de Bassano. It was generally known, though the particulars had not been ascertained, that at Prague France might have obtained a glorious peace, and that the emperor had refused; it was known that now again the emperor had just received a very satisfactory proposition, and an antechamber rumour reported that he had not replied in a suitable manner; and for all these faults M. de Bassano was blamed; his pride and want of foresight having, it was said, caused all our misfortunes. It was said that instead of enlightening Napoleon as to the true state of

things, M. de Bassano had done all he could to deceive him, as if any one could be responsible for the acts of so self-willed a character. M. de Bassano had been undoubtedly a complaisant minister, but more complying than dangerous, or it is doubtful if even by joining M. de Caulaincourt he could have obtained a more favourable result at Prague. He certainly ought to have tried, and if he had not saved France, he would at least have exonerated himself. He was now overwhelmed with the common injustice that springs from passion; and M. de Caulaincourt, who owed him a grudge for not having supported his opinion at Prague; M. de Talleyrand, who amused his leisure by incessantly rallying him; both declared that to obtain peace it was necessary to persuade the world they really desired it, and that the least humiliating mode of proving this disposition was to dismiss M. de Bassano.

Napoleon resigned himself to this sacrifice, the first, but useless, expiation of his errors. He knew very well that M. de Bassano was not the real culprit, that an attack on the minister was a blow directed against himself, and though his sense of justice as well as his pride was wounded by the sacrifice, the emperor consented to withdraw M. de Bassano from the administration of foreign affairs, for the danger was pressing, and he felt that on every side he was obliged to make sacrifices on the altar of public opinion. Thus under despotic as well as under free governments the instrument that has been used for the perpetration of a wrong is punished, only under an absolute government the pride of the monarch is made to suffer, for he is obliged to condemn himself in punishing his tool. Besides, the avowal is at once vexatious and fruitless, because the sacrifice is made when the evil is irreparable.

The two authors of M. de Bassano's disgrace, M. Talleyrand and de Caulaincourt, were alone capable of filling his place. Napoleon first thought of the former, who had more weight in Europe than the latter, though he was less respected. M. de Talleyrand, with his wonderful political sagacity, saw the termination of the empire approaching; however, he was not sufficiently assured of the event to refuse the direction of foreign affairs, a post to which he originally owed his greatness. But distrusting Napoleon's despotism as much as Napoleon distrusted his fidelity, he still set much value on remaining a great dignitary. Now on this point Napoleon had laid down for himself a principle, which was never to combine in the same individual the ministerial power with the quality of a grand dignitary. In his empire, such as he had desired it, the great dignitaries, emanating from the royal authority, watching over the different branches of the administration, possessed somewhat of the inviolability of the monarch, as they also partook in

some degree of his august character. Now, he did not wish his ministers to be inviolable, and M. de Talleyrand less than another. But M. de Talleyrand ardently wished to hold this position, particularly under such a master as Napoleon. Through the operation of these despicable motives there was a misunderstanding, and M. de Caulaincourt became minister of foreign affairs. There could not be found a minister more estimable, more esteemed, or more welcome to the other governments of Europe.

Napoleon profited of the opportunity to effect some other changes in the ministry; some of these were the consequence of that which had just been accomplished, others were the result of a more remote design. In withdrawing M. de Bassano from the direction of foreign affairs, Napoleon did not intend to leave this faithful servant without office; he gave him the post of secretary of state, where his duties brought him into the most intimate communication with the monarch. This was bringing him back to the starting-point of his ambition, but it was necessary to yield to public opinion, at that time stronger than Napoleon himself. M. Daru at that time held the office of secretary of state. There were still fewer motives for removing from office a person whose absence was not desired either by the public or the monarch. M. Daru, a minister upright, firm, indefatigable, who had always accompanied Napoleon in his most difficult affairs, and shared his most trying dangers, was besides reputed to have given very useful advice on many occasions, and nobody could see a public advantage in his removal from office. Napoleon, who himself held these opinions, constituted M. Daru one of the two war ministers. General Clarke, Duke of Feltre, had the administration of the personnel; M. de Cessac that of the matériel. The latter had long done good service, and was capable of doing still more; but Napoleon, forced to make vacancies, allowed him to forestall the time of his retirement from office, and dismissed him with many well-merited marks of distinction. M. Daru succeeded M. de Cessac. And lastly, Judge Reynier, Duke of Massa, a magistrate upright and laborious in the discharge of his duties, but advanced in age, and no longer able to support the fatigues of office. Napoleon, though esteeming him highly, had already removed him temporarily in consequence of a long illness, and he profited of the present occasion to replace him permanently by M. le Comte Molé, whose intelligence, name, and manner of thinking pleased him. Napoleon, not wishing that this substitution of another in his place should seem a disgrace for the Duke of Massa, resolved to make him president of the legislative body. M. de Massa was not a member of the legislative corps, and consequently had no chance of being placed upon the list of candidates for the presidency,

which this body had a right to present. But in those days slight difficulties were not allowed to stand in the way. It was decided that a change should be effected in the constitution by means of a *senatus-consulte*, and that the legislative body should no longer contribute to the nomination of the president by a presentation of candidates. This was not a well-chosen moment to give offence to a body that, following the prevailing example of the times, seemed to acquire courage in proportion as Napoleon lost his strength; however, the changes proceeded, and this *senatus-consulte*, less insignificant than it seemed to be, was prepared with several others more useful and more urgent.

The question now was, on the eve of the last terrible struggle against combined Europe, to raise men and money, to raise them in abundance, and quickly. These two means, so essential to the carrying on war, were exhausted. In the preceding month of October, before leaving Dresden for Leipsic, Napoleon had commissioned Marie Louise to repair to the Senate to procure the conscription of 1815, which was to furnish 160,000 conscripts, and besides, an extra levy of 120,000 men from the classes of 1812, 1813, and 1814, who were already disbanded. The Senate had made no more difficulty of granting these 280,000 men than it had made in abandoning to Napoleon so many victims of war, then lying buried in the plains of Castille, of Germany, of Poland, and of Russia. Unfortunately these immense levies, whose prompt enrolment was so desirable, were more easily decreed than put into execution.

Amongst the 280,000 men whose enrolment had been decided in October, we must consider as wholly unfit for service in the approaching conscription of 1815 those who, thanks to the system of forestallments, had been sent as soldiers at 18 and 19 years of age, that is to say, children, brave but weak, and incapable of supporting the hardships of war. Europe had seen thousands of these children perish, who, full of ardour on the battlefield, died of fatigue on the highroads or in the hospitals. Napoleon did not wish any more of these, and if he asked the conscription of 1815, it was with the intention of forming a body of reserve which would fill the *dépôts* and occupy the garrisons. He could then only reckon on the 120,000 men of the former conscriptions. But to raise this levy, the only one that could be useful, would be extremely difficult, because it would be necessary to seek men already discharged, and who, having already on several occasions furnished substitutes, would find themselves drawn as conscripts a third and even a fourth time. This falling back on the conscripts who had already served, though it procured soldiers of a better quality, was also attended by the grave disadvantage of exciting the most violent

discontent, and requiring the most delicate management, which rendered the levies much less productive. Under these circumstances, married men could not be called out, nor men necessary to the support of their families, and thus, whilst 100,000 men were expected, they were glad to obtain 60,000.

Justifying himself by the pressure of circumstances, Napoleon conceived the idea of falling back on all the classes that had already served, and taking all the unmarried men whose services were not indispensable to their families. Reckoning at 300,000 the men whom he might raise in this way, he caused a *senatus-consulte* to be drawn up, which authorised him to raise the number from the discharged classes, reascending from 1813 to 1803. These 300,000 men, joined to the 280,000 decreed in October, raised to about 600,000 the levies about to be called out during this winter, and never, it must be said, had such exorbitant demands been made on a population, or any so destructive to future generations. It was not the opposition of the Senate that was feared, but that of private families, and it was very doubtful whether, even threatened with legal compulsion, they could be brought to satisfy such demands. Certainly if the 600,000 men, originally talked of, could have been assembled, drilled, and embodied in time, there would have been more than a sufficient number of troops to drive back the allies beyond the frontiers. But what with the public discontent on the subject of the war, and what with the prevailing opinion that it was carried on merely to satisfy Napoleon's personal ambition, how many amongst these 600,000 men would respond to the call of government; and above all, how much time would be needed to convert these recruits into disciplined soldiers? Nobody could say. Napoleon, nevertheless, accustomed to the submission of the people, and to the incapacity and tardiness of his adversaries, hoped to obtain a large proportion of the levies, and calculated on having to the approaching April to drill them for the coming campaign.

But whether these 600,000 men arrived a little earlier or later, it would be necessary to pay them, and Napoleon's finances, which had been so well administered during fifteen years, had now, like all the other branches of his power, sunk under protracted abuses. We have seen how his budgets of 750 millions (without reckoning the 120 millions for *les frais de perception*) had successively mounted to 1000 millions after the annexation of Rome, of Tuscany, of Illyria, of Holland, and the Hanseatic cities. The war having since 1812 assumed gigantic proportions, the budget of 1813 had mounted to 1191 millions without the *frais de perception*. The expenses of the last war, those at least that were cleared by the budget, having mounted from 600 to 700 millions, it was supposed that this



budget would touch 1300 millions (1420 including the *fruits de perception*), at that time esteemed an enormous amount. Thus within two years the budget had mounted from 1000 to 1400 millions, and if we refer to the market prices of that period, we shall be able to estimate the actual amount of property this rate of taxation assumes to be in the country. Still it would be all as nothing if we could only make head against our difficulties. But independent of the 100 millions in excess of our expenses, imputable to war, there was a deficiency of 70 millions in the revenue. It was then 170 millions which, by an excess on one side and a deficiency on the other, represented our real shortcomings for the year. But there was another deficiency still more embarrassing. Not being able to have recourse to a loan, and not wishing to have recourse to taxation, Napoleon had conceived the idea of selling the municipal property, and of realising the value in advance, by means of bills, on the *caisse d'amortissement*: 46 millions of these bills had been applied to the budget of 1811; 77 to that of 1812; and 149 to the budget of 1813. This expedient had completely failed. More than two millions of this municipal property had not been sold, in consequence of the tedious formalities, the public distress, and the general distrust. The bills issued not having come into general circulation, were exposed to an increasing depreciation, and yet, perhaps at the utmost, more than from 25 to 30 millions had not been offered to the public, the precaution having been taken of distributing the greater part to the contractors. Notwithstanding these precautions, there was already a loss of from 15 to 20 per cent. There was thus at the same time a loss of the 272 millions which were to have been raised by bills, and the 170 millions deficient in the budget of 1813, which made a total deficit of 442 millions, an overwhelming deficiency at a time when there were no means of raising credit, unless the public and private banks could be induced to receive the bills of the *caisse d'amortissement*. Ten millions had been given to the Bank of France, 62 millions to the *caisse de service*, 52 millions to the *douane extraordinaire*, which exhausted, as we have seen, the last disposable means to be drawn from this source.

The privy purse of the crown remained, containing the savings Napoleon had made out of the Civil List. Napoleon, as we have already said, thanks to an admirable spirit of order, had saved 135,000,000 from the Civil List. He had placed 17,000,000 of this in the Mont-Napoleon at Milan, 8,000,000 in the Banque de France, 4,000,000 in the salt-works. He had lent 13,000,000 to the *caisse de service*, and he had employed 26,000,000 in the purchase of bills of the *caisse d'amortissement*. There remained, besides, three or four millions to meet the current expenses of

the crown, and 63,000,000 in gold and silver deposited in the vaults in the Tuileries, a last resource, which he guarded religiously, not as a means of providing for himself in a foreign country (such forethought was beneath his lofty ambition), but to sustain his last struggle against the universal rising of the nations.

With the exception of these 63,000,000, Napoleon had exhausted all the public banks to force them to take the bills that represented the value of the municipal property. Having found in this way the means of passing 150,000,000 of these bills, there remained of the total deficiency of 442,000,000, of which we have spoken, an actual deficiency of about 300,000,000, which there were no means of meeting, every resource being absolutely exhausted.

In such a state of things the necessity of recurring to taxation became imperative. But if Napoleon, on the plea of necessity, had made the enormous demand of 600,000 men, he might easily, on the same plea, ask for a few millions in money. Moreover, taxation was the only source of revenue which had hitherto been carefully managed, the only source that remained intact, though indirect contributions, at all times unpopular, were then loudly decried under the name of *droits réunis*. But the direct taxation might still bear a fresh burden, and that, too, pretty heavy. By adding merely thirty centimes to the income-tax of 1813 it was easy to raise 80,000,000, available on the instant. It was possible to obtain 30,000,000 more by doubling the *contribution mobilière*. It was therefore decreed in council that the payment of these sums should be required in the months of November, December, and January. There was an addition of one-fifth made on the salt duty, and of a tenth on the indirect taxes. These extra taxes were expected to produce immediately 120,000,000, without over-pressure, excepting, perhaps, pressing a little on the taxes that would be required for the year 1814. With these 120,000,000, with the ordinary taxes, with the treasure concealed in the Tuileries, and certain postponements that State creditors were obliged to submit to, means were found to satisfy the more pressing wants.

The question now was to legalise these demands for money. Napoleon, by a decree dated from the banks of the Rhine, had fixed the 2nd of December for the assemblage of the legislative corps, hoping to be able to make use of this body to obtain extraordinary resources, and to awaken the patriotism of the nation. Already a certain number of the legislators had repaired to Paris; but they were not found quite so well disposed as was desired, for, with the rapid increase of danger, and the no less rapid decay of Napoleon's prestige, the spirit of inde-

pendence had revived in the public mind. Disagreeable discussions were therefore to be feared, and besides, however prompt might be the adoption of the proposed measures, they could not be effected before the middle of December, and the receipt of the money should then be deferred to January, whilst it was actually wanted at the moment. It was then resolved that the levy of the extra centimes should be made by a decree, by which means a month was gained. This manner of proceeding, which would be utterly impossible under a legitimate and regular régime, was authorised by more than one precedent. In fact, sometimes to furnish the equipment of cavalry soldiers, voted by the departments, sometimes in order to distribute more equally the requisitions by converting them into public contributions, the prefects had not hesitated to levy the additional centimes, by virtue of their personal authority; and whether through a feeling of necessity, whether through the habit of submission, nobody had complained. The emperor might surely, in the presence of absolute danger, venture as far as the prefects, and by a decree passed on the 11th November, the next day but one after his arrival at Paris, he commanded the immediate payment of the sums we have enumerated. The crime was not great if we compare it with the illegal acts the imperial government had often committed; and besides, there was the excuse of the imminence of the danger. But this act, like many others, proves what value was then set on the laws. The meeting of the legislative corps, becoming less necessary, since extraordinary levies had been raised by a simple decree, the assembly was adjourned from the 2nd to the 19th of December, in order to escape importunate discussions. The precaution, as we shall soon see, was not a wise one, for these legislators, all staying at Paris, and passing their time idly, or in imbibing the opinions of the capital, did not become more indulgent towards a government basely flattered when all-powerful, freely criticised the moment it began to decline, and threatened on the eve of its fall by a universal outburst. Another inconvenience attendant on the assemblage of the legislative corps which the government wished to avoid was the election of the fourth series (the legislative body was divided into five), whose powers expired at the commencement of 1813, and the election had already been deferred a year. To assemble the electors at this moment being attended with quite as much danger as assembling the deputies, it was decided to defer the election of the fourth series another year. This measure, and that which abolished the list of candidates for the presidency of the legislative body, that also of a fresh call for 300,000 men, raised simply by the authority of the Senate, which was supposed to be always sitting and

always submissive, as it actually was to the penultimate hour of the empire. The assembly was convoked for the 15th November, and presented with these three measures.

The meeting of the Senate was distinguished by unusual pomp. There was a desire to awaken the spirit of the nation, to speak to the people's heart, to excite their patriotic devotedness. Unfortunately, when nations are spoken to, either rarely or too late, the orators are liable to be listened to with distrust, or to be misunderstood. The government orator related in vain the late reverses of our armies, he declaimed in vain against the perfidy of our allies, against the fatal imprudence committed at the bridge of Leipsic; he pointed out in vain what France had to fear from a victorious coalition; he produced little effect on an impassible and degraded Senate; he wrought only one conviction, that indeed the danger was imminent, and that it was necessary to call on the nation to make great efforts without, alas! the hope of seeing such an appeal responded to after fifteen years' reckless and fruitless war. The 300,000 men to be drawn from the discharged conscripts were voted without a single objection. The adjournment of the election of the fourth series was also accorded, the motive alleged being that it was of pressing necessity to assemble the legislative body, rather a singular reason when the meeting of this body had been adjourned from the 2nd to the 19th of December, though the majority of the members were in Paris. And the motive adduced for the suppression of the list of candidates for the presidency of the legislative body was not less singular. It was that perhaps the proposed candidates might be ignorant of court etiquette, or be personally unknown to the emperor. The Senate did not question the substance nor the motives of the decrees; they voted them without observation, as they were ready to vote everything, even to the day when they voted the downfall of Napoleon himself at the bidding of foreigners.

These political, military, and financial measures had occupied Napoleon incessantly since his arrival in Paris. One of his first acts, and one which might be deemed fortunate, if it had not occurred somewhat late, was to transfer the foreign correspondence from M. de Bassano to M. de Caulaincourt. M. de Metternich, on receiving M. de Bassano's reply, which was at the same time enigmatical and ironical, had replied, after consulting the allied courts, and his reply was pretty much to this effect:—"The allies have learned with pleasure," he said, "that the emperor has at length recognised in M. de St. Aignan's mission a sincere desire for peace. They are also glad that he has pointed out Manheim as a place of assembly for the congress, and will accept his choice; but," he added, "the allies do not see with the same satisfaction the care with which the French

government avoids all explanation as to the fundamental basis proposed at Frankfort, and they feel compelled to demand, as a preliminary to all negotiation, the formal adoption or rejection of the basis."

It ought to have been a source of satisfaction to the French emperor to find the allies still insist on the adoption of the Frankfort basis, though it might now be doubtful whether they were sincere; but the emperor ought to hasten and take them at their word ere they retracted the propositions. The fact of M. de Caulaincourt being now manager of foreign affairs left no doubt as to the character of the reply. He urged upon Napoleon the necessity of sending such an answer as ought to have been sent on the 16th November, and he succeeded. Without losing an instant he wrote on the 2nd December, that, acceding to the proposition of a congress, and accepting the principle of the independence of all nations established within their natural frontiers, the emperor had, by implication, accepted the primary basis laid down in M. de St. Aignan's instructions, and that now, to remove all difficulty, these were expressly accepted; that these conditions demanded great sacrifices from France, but she would willingly make these sacrifices in the cause of peace, especially if England would give up the maritime conquests which France had a right to demand of her, and consent that the same principles of negotiation should obtain on sea as on land.

It is probable that had this reply been despatched eighteen days previously, events might have taken a very different course. But now many pretexts might be made as to a change of opinion on the part of the allied powers; if better informed of our distress, they wished to retract the offers they had made at Frankfort.

In consenting to treat on the basis of the natural limits of France, Napoleon mentally resolved to retain all he possibly could beyond these limits, and in the instructions to the plenipotentiary whom he had already chosen (it was M. de Caulaincourt), he laid down the following conditions. In consenting that he should have nothing beyond the Rhine, it was yet to be understood that he was to keep on the right bank of that river, Kehl, opposite Strasburg, Cassel, opposite Mayence, and the city of Wesel, situated on the right bank, but which had become in some sort a French city. As to Holland, he did not despair of keeping a part of that by abandoning the Dutch colonies to England. In any case, he was resolved to dispute the limits that separated Holland from France, and to propose, first the Yssel, then the Leck, and lastly the Nahal, a frontier from which he was resolved not to retire, and which would secure to him that portion of Holland he had taken from King

**Louis.** He also wished it to be understood that Holland was not to fall again under the authority of the house of Orange, but that it should become republic.

As to Germany, he was satisfied to renounce the Confederation of the Rhine; but on condition that no federal union should subsist between the German States, and that in restoring Magdeburg to Prussia, and Hanover to England, Hesse and Brunswick should be consolidated into the kingdom of Westphalia, independent of France, but governed by Prince Jerome.

Napoleon wished that Erfurth should be conceded to Saxony in indemnification for the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. He desired that Bavaria should preserve the boundary of the Inn; and this he proposed in order that he should not be obliged to give up Wurzburg, which would necessitate an indemnification to the Duke of Wurzburg in Italy.

In Italy, he was willing that Austria should have, besides Illyria, that is to say, Laybach and Trieste, a portion of territory beyond the Isonzo, but on condition that France should advance as far into Piedmont as Austria into Friuli. All that France had possessed in the Milannaise, Piedmont, Tuscany, and the Roman States should form an Italian kingdom, alike independent of Austria and France, and governed by Prince Eugène.

The Pope was to return to Rome, but without temporal sovereignty. Naples should belong to Murat, Sicily to the Neapolitan Bourbons. The ancient King of Piedmont should have Sardinia alone.

The Ionian Isles should be incorporated with an Italian State, if Malta were ceded to Sicily. In any other case, the Ionian Isles should belong to France with the Isle of Elba.

Spain should be restored to Ferdinand VII., and Portugal to the house of Braganza. But England should not retain any of the Spanish or Portuguese colonies.

Denmark was to keep Norway. Lastly, an article was to be inserted which should describe in less general terms the rights of the neutral flag.

Such were the conditions that Napoleon wished to present to the future congress at Manheim. Unfortunately, he erred widely in his reckoning, and notwithstanding his profound sagacity, spite of his clear knowledge of his position, a knowledge so clear as to make him doubt whether the allies could seriously offer him the Frankfort bases, he had still the weakness to think these propositions would be listened to at Manheim. It is true that at this moment he entertained a hope which might justify his flattering dreams, could it be realised: it was that the war would not recommence until April. If, in fact, the allies, fatigued by this terrible campaign, should pause

on the banks of the Rhine until April, and thus afford him four months to prepare his resources, he might, with the débris of his armies, and the 600,000 men voted by the Senate, muster at least 300,000 disciplined soldiers, and with this force combined under his powerful hand he might thrust back from the banks of the Rhine the enemy that would have dared to cross that river. It is certain that with 300,000 soldiers fighting on friendly soil, and within a circumscribed space, their martial spirit dilated by misfortune, the chances of success were manifold. But would the enemy accord him these four months? Was it reasonable to suppose they would? That was the question, and on this question depended both his throne and our greatness; not our moral greatness, which was indestructible, but our material greatness, which was subject to ordinary laws.

As to the rest, the emperor acted not as if he had four, but as if he had scarcely two months left for preparation, and he employed the resources put at his disposal with his characteristic activity, now excited beyond the ordinary pitch. The garrisons were the first places that needed looking after. They were distributed into two divisions: those of the Rhine and those of the Schelde, covering our natural frontier, Huningue, Bèfort, Schelestadt, Strasburg, Landau, Mayence, Cologne, Wesel, Gorcum, Antwerp; those of the interior, covering our frontier of 1790, Metz, Thionville, Luxemburg, Mezières, Mons, Valenciennes, Lille, &c.: we only name the principal. Whilst Alessandria, Mantua, Venice, Palma-Novo, Osopo, Dantzic, Flessingue, and the Texel were defended by expensive works; places indispensable to our home protection, Huningue, Strasburg, Landau, Mayence, Metz, Mezières, Valenciennes, Lille, were left utterly defenceless. The scaling ladders were standing, but stepless; the pont-levis unfit for use. The guns were not mounted; there was a want of tools, of wood for blinds, of bridges of communication between the works, of horses for transport, of smiths and carpenters. The artillery and engineer officers who had remained in the interior of the country were nearly all old men, unfit to support the fatigues of a siege. Provisions had not yet begun to arrive, and money, which can supply so many wants, was not forthcoming, and it was doubtful whether it could be sent in time and in sufficient quantities. In a word, we wanted garrisons, and it was to be feared that in forming them we might weaken the active army, already so much impoverished.

We endeavoured to supply first the most pressing wants. It was of imperative necessity to transport the dépôts of the several regiments from the first line of fortresses to the second, in order to disembarass those that might be first attacked, and to put beyond the reach of the enemy those dépôts that were the sources that recruited the regiments. This measure, tardily undertaken,

was difficult, for not only was it necessary to transport the men, both healthy and ill, from one place to the other, but also the superintendents and the magazines. The dépôts that were at Strasburg, Landau, Mayence, Cologne, and Wesel were transferred to Nancy, Metz, Thionville, Mezières, Lille, &c. Marshal Kellermann, Duke de Valmy, who had rendered such good service in the organisation of troops, and who had commanded *en chef* at Strasburg, Mayence, and Wesel, was appointed to the superintendence of Nancy, Metz, Mezières. This displacement was immediately commenced, notwithstanding the severity of the season.

Napoleon gave orders to the prefects to provision the garrison with the utmost speed, by paying, or promising to pay shortly, for the goods and cattle they were authorised to seize. They were to act in the same manner with regard to wood and any materials that might be needed. The marshals commanding the active troops—Marshal Victor at Strasburg, Marshal Marmont at Mayence, Marshal Macdonald at Cologne and Wesel—received instructions to occupy themselves as much with the organisation of the different corps as with providing the garrisons. All the detachments remaining of the 32nd military division, that is to say, from the country between Hamburg and Wesel, formed the nucleus of the garrison of Wesel. The 4th corps, unfortunate débris of so many corps amalgamated into one, was entrusted with the defence of Mayence, under General Morand, its former *chef*. General Bertrand, who had commanded this corps in its last quarters, had been appointed grand-marshal of the palace, in recompense for his fidelity. Strasburg received some skeleton regiments that were to be filled up with conscripts and national guards. The known fidelity of Alsace permitted it to be entrusted to the national guards, a force of which Napoleon did not wish to make use except for garrison defences. Skeleton squadrons of artillery, recruited hurriedly, furnished the *personnel* of this branch. As many good commanders as could be had were appointed, to whom were added some engineer officers, selected amongst the least aged of those that remained in France, and all were advised to employ the winter in drilling to the best of their ability. It must be acknowledged that the soldiers were not deficient in zeal.

The measures adopted for the three most important fortresses of the first line, Strasburg, Mayence, and Wesel, were, with the exception of some local differences, carried out in all the others. In approaching old France, the national guards were called on with more confidence to defend the country. We have just said that Napoleon was not much inclined to employ them. He, of course, distrusted them, because they might be, in a very disagreeable manner, the reflex of the public mind; however,



his motives were not exclusively selfish. At the moment when he demanded from the population nearly 600,000 men, he dreaded urging public discontent too far by appealing to every class of citizen at the same time, and especially to that of fathers of families, who, for the most part, composed the national guard. Besides, being deficient in the necessary equipments for his soldiers, he preferred giving clothes and guns to the army than to the national guards. It was only in the frontier garrisons, when there was not time to throw in regular troops, that the national guards, being ready drilled, and moreover imbued with a martial spirit, were allowed to enter and complete the garrison. The emperor also made use of them in some large cities of the interior, when the public peace might happen to be disturbed in consequence of the general ferment, and he decided that in these cities, the principal inhabitants formed into battalions of grenadiers and chasseurs, armed and equipped at their own expense, and commanded by trustworthy officers, should be charged to maintain public tranquillity.

Napoleon turned his attention to the active army. To the divers woes that had assailed our troops since their return from Germany, there was now added one more terrible than all the others—the dreadful typhus. Originating in the overcrowded hospitals on the Elbe, imported thence to the Rhine by the wounded, the sick, the stragglers, it had made terrible ravages, particularly at Mayence. The 4th corps, which had been raised to 15,000 men, by the union of the 4th, 12th, 7th, and 15th corps, and subsequently increased to 30,000 by other additions, lost in one month half its number, and dwindled down to less than 15,000 men. From the soldiers the contagion spread to the surrounding population, and death carried off as many of the one as of the other class. This horrible scourge had assumed, under the influence of famine, hideous and heart-rending forms. The constitution of many of our young soldiers had been so weakened by privations and fatigue that their fingers and toes fell off piecemeal, gnawed by gangrene. The alarm became general at Mayence, and at the earnest entreaties of the inhabitants, the authorities, in the hope of diminishing the infection, had ordered the immediate removal of numbers of the sick to the interior. This proceeding had involved fresh calamities. The public roads were now seen covered with carts, each bearing thirty of these unhappy creatures, some dead, others expiring beside dead bodies, from which they could not separate. And now the contagion began to spread from the first to the second line of fortresses, and the city of Metz was thrown into a state of terror on learning that some soldiers had died in the hospitals of typhus.

Marshal Marmont, deeply touched by this spectacle, had

laboured most strenuously to diminish the evil, and had at first prevented the removals which exposed so many unfortunate beings to perish on the highroads, and threatened with contagion our inland cities. He had seized every ship that could be converted into a hospital, and had translated the sick of one hospital to the other, without allowing them to pass from city to city. A local tax on the adjacent districts had provided for the wants of the sick, and the plague, thanks to the salutary measures adopted, had appeared, if not to diminish very much, at least to pause in its onward course. Notwithstanding these precautions, one of Marshal Marmont's regiments, the 2nd marines, had been reduced in a month from 2162 men to 1054.

By the authority of the emperor, Marshal Marmont had removed from Mayence those corps that were not indispensable to the defence of the place. The 2nd, commanded by Marshal Victor, had been already sent forward to Strasburg; the 5th and 11th combined, under Marshal Macdonald, were sent to Cologne and Wesel. Marshal Marmont sent to Worms the 3rd and 6th, which were appointed to serve under him, and only left at Mayence the 4th, to garrison the place. Lastly, by order of Napoleon, he drew off from Mayence the guard, both young and old, and subdivided them between Kaisers-Lutern, Deux-Ponts, Sareguemines, Sarre-Louis, Thionville, Luxemburg, Treves, &c.

Napoleon afterwards gave orders for the reorganisation of the different corps. The greater part had become simple divisions, and contributed thus to form new corps. The only exception was the 2nd, quartered at Strasburg, and located near its dépôts, where the means of supplying its wants with the greatest facility and completeness were near at hand. The first proceeding was to take out of the infantry dépôts all the tolerably well-drilled subjects they contained. Napoleon hoped to get an increase of 500 soldiers for each regiment, and immediately raise the infantry quartered on the Rhine to 80,000 men. The conscripts demanded by the late decrees from the discharged classes were to be sent to the nearest dépôts to be drilled and equipped as soon as possible, and according as they should have two, three, or four months' instruction, might increase to 100,000, 120,000, or 140,000 men the Rhenish army. The conscripts of these same classes belonging to the frontier departments were to be thrown into the fortresses, drafted into some skeleton regiments left behind, and there the conscripts would be drilled into doing garrison duty. These would certainly have abundant leisure to be drilled and equipped, provided they had time to arrive before our fortresses should be invested.

After having bestowed these cares on the Rhenish frontier,

Napoleon turned his attention to the Belgian, which would be in greater danger, if the enemy contested our natural limits. He also thought of Holland, which covered Belgium. These two countries, ill defended, were profoundly disturbed, and it was of urgent importance to send thither a considerable body of forces. The only resources at the command of General Molitor, who was entrusted with the defence of Holland, were some foreign regiments, of suspicious fidelity, and some weakly constituted French battalions. These were small means to oppose Bernadotte, who at this moment was advancing on Holland with the greater part of his army, and Marshal Macdonald, at thirty leagues' distance, with the débris of the 5th and 11th corps, was not likely to be of much assistance to General Molitor. Napoleon made an effort to send him some reinforcements with the utmost expedition. He had long cherished his favourite idea of saving the powerful garrisons of Dresden and Hamburg, which would undoubtedly have been sufficient to maintain us in the possession of Holland and Belgium. But we have seen the fate of the garrison of Dresden, made prisoners of war by a violation of every principle of justice; and as to that of Hamburg, whilst Marshal Davout was thinking of putting himself at the head of the troops, and marching towards the Rhine, the forces of Bernadotte, inundating Westphalia, had obliged him to fall back within his entrenchments. There was therefore nothing to expect on this side, and so the defences of the empire were weakened by the abstraction of 70,000 excellent soldiers. As to the regiments of Marshal Davout that had furnished the 1st corps, which was made prisoner at Dresden, and the 13th, which was shut up in Hamburg, all had their dépôts in Belgium. Napoleon poured conscripts into these dépôts, hoping thus to compose an army of 40,000 infantry, that he intended to put under the command of the brave General Decaen. Throwing in this manner conscripts and national guards into the fortresses, especially into Antwerp, he reckoned that this army, called *l'armée du Nord*, increased to 50,000 men, manœuvring between Utrecht, Gorcum, Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom, and Antwerp, and protected by the inundations, would suffice to cover Belgium and Holland.

The army of the Rhine was then to commence seriously its own particular duties, without feeling any uneasiness to the conservation of the Low Countries, and to make head against the allied troops that might assume the offensive, either by coming in separate columns through Cologne, Mayence, and Strasburg, or pouring down en masse by one of these three roads. We have just seen that Napoleon, by taking out of the dépôts the men already drilled, and replacing them by conscripts drawn from the discharged classes, who could in case

of emergency be dispensed from passing through the dépôts, and might be sent directly to join the regiments—we have seen that Napoleon hoped, by these means, to raise first to 80,000, and afterwards to 140,000 men, the infantry established on the Rhine. He flattered himself that by reorganising his cavalry and his artillery he might increase the number to 200,000 in the spring, and ultimately to 300,000 by uniting them with the imperial guard. He intended to give this latter corps an extent that it had never yet possessed. To carry out this idea, he projected the following combinations.

Although attended by some serious inconveniences, the guard, by its high military spirit and admirable discipline, had rendered essential service in the last campaign, both by performing prodigies of valour on the battlefield, and by preserving in adversity a firmness that none of the other regiments displayed. The guard was now reduced to about 12,000 infantry, and from 3000 to 4000 cavalry. It consisted of two divisions of the old guard, grenadiers and chasseurs, two of the *moyenne* guard, fusiliers and flankers, and four of the young guard, riflemen and light infantry. As the guard possessed many soldiers capable of becoming excellent sub-officers, it would be easy to increase its extent, without diminishing its spirit, or detracting from its oneness. Of all the corps of the army, it was that into which thousands of young men might be most easily incorporated, and where they would in the shortest time become soldiers. To facilitate his success in this project, Napoleon had another means, owing entirely to one man, and this man was the illustrious Druot, a commanding officer of artillery in the guard, and an accomplished model of every warlike virtue. Druot, simple in his manners, and even somewhat awkward in his address, had not at first been appreciated by Napoleon. But whilst in these incessant wars ambition and fatigue increased simultaneously, and the slightest services were obliged to be highly recompensed, Napoleon had been struck by the conduct of Druot, who, knowing thoroughly every branch of his profession, and devoting himself to the discharge of his duties with indefatigable ardour, without seeking like many others to set a higher value on his services as difficulties increased; proportioning thus in silence his energy to danger and his zeal to the embarrassment of the government; having never flattered his master in prosperity, he did not seek to worry him now by importunate advice, contenting himself with serving to the utmost of his ability the prince and country whom he identified in his affections and devotedness. Napoleon, like all despots of genius, was pleased with flattery, even when he did not believe it, but he could not help esteeming and seeking the society of honest men when he came in contact

with them, and for this reason he had gradually acquired an affection for Druot which increased with his reverses, and at the moment of which we now speak he had resolved to confide to him the command of his entire guard. He had perceived that the minister Clarke succumbed to the pressure of necessity, and even that his fidelity was beginning to be shaken. On this account he had begun to entertain serious distrust of him. He made Druot an actual minister of the imperial guard without conferring any other title on him than that of his aide-de-camp. All promotions were placed in his gift, and promotion ought to be rapid in a corps destined to increase considerably. He confided to him, besides, his last resource, his *poire pour la soif*, as he called it, his 63 millions, the fruits of his personal savings, certain that Druot would equip the different corps of the guard with as much economy as could be hoped from the purest probity and the most watchful vigilance.

According to the instructions of Napoleon, the companies were to be increased from four to six in the battalions of the guard. The battalions were to be increased to eighteen in the old guard, to eight in the *moyenne*, and to fifty-two in the young guard. The old guard was to be recruited with the picked men of the entire army, the *moyenne* and the young guard from the conscripts, taking care to choose the best. These different combinations, if put into execution, would give an increase of at least 80,000 infantry. With the cavalry, the artillery, the engineers, the parks, Napoleon expected that his forces would be little short of 100,000 men. He authorised Druot to purchase horses, to order carriages for the guns, and to establish at Paris and Metz warehouses for equipping the soldiers. He advised him to do everything himself, to pay everything himself without employing the mediatory services of the war minister. Druot was to receive from the private treasurer of the emperor whatever funds he might need.

With 200,000 soldiers of the line, and 100,000 of the imperial guard, Napoleon did not despair of repulsing from our land the allied armies that had dared to invade it. We shall soon see, by what he accomplished with 80,000, if this hope was presumptuous.

Napoleon next directed his thoughts to Italy and Spain. Prince Eugène was on the Adige with about 40,000 men, making himself respected by the enemy, and having a chance of being able to hold his position, notwithstanding the English attempt at debarkation, if Murat would limit his infidelity to inaction. Napoleon, not wishing to augment the number of Italians in the army of Prince Eugène, nor give Italy fresh pretexts for discontent, forbore to levy a conscription in that country, and determined to send from France a sufficient number of conscripts.

He had already raised to 28,000 recruits the portion destined for Prince Eugène in the levies voted in October, and he intended 30,000 for him out of the 300,000 men to be drawn from the discharged classes. He ordered they should be chosen in Franche-Comté, in Dauphiné, and in Provence, in order that they might have less distance to travel. Prince Eugène was to clothe these new troops from the abundant resources of Italy, then to draft them into the vacancies in his army, by which means he might have 100,000 combatants under his command in the month of April. In Italy, as elsewhere, the question was narrowed to a point—what time would elapse before the resumption of hostilities?

Lastly, though Napoleon had renounced Spain, he had still an interest in the Pyrenees, now threatened by the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the English, all loudly avowing the hope of avenging the invasion of Spain by reprisals on France. The army of Aragon, under the command of Marshal Suchet, the so-called army of Spain, confided to Marshal Soult, amounted to twenty regiments each, and had their depôts between Nîmes, Montpellier, Perpignan, Carcassonne, Toulouse, Bayonne, and Bordeaux. Napoleon ordered each of these armies to detach a *cadre de bataillon* from each regiment, which could be easily done, considering the diminution they had suffered in the effective force, and to send these skeleton battalions to Montpellier, Nîmes, Toulouse, and Bordeaux, where 60,000 conscripts from the discharged classes would be assembled. Each of these forty battalions, receiving 1500 recruits, was to send 500 to the armies of Spain and Aragon, which would recruit these armies to the amount of 20,000 men, and supply through the length of the Pyrenees a reserve of 40,000 to profit of events.

With these various resources assembled on the frontiers of Belgium, the Rhine, of Italy and the Pyrenees, Napoleon, still pertinaciously believing he had four months before him, did not despair of overcoming the prodigious difficulties of his position. But the disposition to obey his demand for recruits diminished daily; and it was not the noisy language of venal journals—it was not the silence of the Senate that could transmute this reluctance into ardent patriotism. The emperor, endeavouring to render the sacrifices required of the people less sensibly felt, desired that the levies on the three discharged classes of 1813, 1812, and 1811 should be finished first, and that the anterior classes should not be proceeded with for the moment. This first levy was expected to yield from 140,000 to 150,000 men. It was only after completing this levy that recourse was had to the earlier classes, always omitting the married men, those not likely to be very useful, or those whose services were indispensable to their families. For the same reason he wished these

levies to commence in the provinces immediately threatened with invasion, such as Landes, Languedoc, Franche-Comté, Alsace, Lorraine, Champagne, provinces where the military spirit was most rife and the danger most pressing. Still influenced by prudential considerations, Napoleon postponed the conscription of 1815, which could only supply soldiers whose extreme youth would add another source of suffering to the many woes to which the army was already exposed. If peace did not put a speedy termination to the war, he would defer the conscription of 1815 to the close of the year.

But levying men was not the sole difficulty; it would be necessary to clothe and arm them, to provide saddle and draught horses. Napoleon established extra magazines at Paris, at Bordeaux, at Toulouse, at Montpellier, at Lyons, at Nantz, &c., for the more expeditious making-up of clothes for the army. Though to provide clothing was not found an easy task, it yet presented fewer obstacles than furnishing horses. However, France was less exhausted of saddle-horses than Germany; she still possessed a considerable number of good ones. The draught-horses for the artillery and carriages were as good as could be wished. Five thousand had just been purchased. Napoleon ordered the purchase of as many more, and gave orders for ten thousand additional, for which ready money was to be paid; and these twenty thousand horses would be sufficient, with the surplus already remaining, for carrying on the war in the interior. Saddle-horses were scarce. Druot was in want of some for the guard. Funds were forwarded to all the regiments to purchase in their respective localities as many horses as they could.

There was an abundance of powder, of lead, of iron of all kinds, bayonets and cannon, but there was a want of guns; and this was one of the principal causes of our ruin. In the days of his prosperity Napoleon had 1,000,000 muskets in his arsenals. But in the campaign of Russia 500,000 had been buried in the snows, and in that of Germany we lost 200,000, and in many foreign places great quantities of French arms had been sacrificed. All these losses had exhausted our arsenals. To establish forges for the manufacture of muskets was much more difficult than to fit up stores for furnishing clothes and horses; and yet there was no use in raising men if they could not be equipped. It was a strange feature that characterised this policy: vast preparations were made for invasion, none for defence! France, when threatened by a foreign force, had more difficulty in procuring 300,000 muskets than 300,000 men to carry them!

Artificers were brought from the provinces where working in iron was best understood; and these men were settled either at

Paris or Versailles, in order to establish manufactories for the repair or construction of fire-arms. The same was done in many of the principal towns. Recourse was had to another means of procuring muskets, which was, disarming the foreign regiments, the fidelity of all being suspected, with the exception of the Swiss and Poles. On the same day, and in different parts of the empire, the Dutch, the Hanseatics, the Croats, and the Germans were disarmed, and the cavalry dismounted. This measure procured a supply of some thousand muskets and some hundred horses. The marine arsenals were afterwards emptied, and still Napoleon's passion for conquest was so strong that he did not hesitate to send off 50,000 muskets to Italy at the very moment when he was not sure of having sufficient for the defence of Paris.

Whilst the emperor was thus endeavouring to reorganise his resources by prodigies of administrative activity, the idea occurred to him of obtaining some more, by a policy which was certainly wise, but adopted too late. He directed General Delort at Frankfort to enter into negotiations with the adverse generals for the surrender of the fortresses on the Vistula and the Oder, on condition of the immediate return into France of the garrisons with arms and baggage. If this condition were accepted, General Delort was afterwards to make overtures for the more important garrisons of Hamburg, Magdeburg, Wittenberg, Erfurth, &c. The ratification of such a proposal would have procured the accession of 100,000 first-class soldiers, and would have yielded, it is true, an equal number to the allies, by terminating the blockade of the fortresses. But whilst this arrangement would have given us back excellent soldiers, our enemy would have gained but very medium ones, and besides, in the state of destitution in which we were, 100,000 men were of more importance to us than 200,000 to the allies. Unfortunately, this reason, which induced the violation of the capitulation of Dresden, left us little hope of succeeding in a negotiation of this kind.

But a still greater resource remained: it was that which could be furnished by the army of Spain, if it could have been transported from the Pyrenees to the Rhine. In that army, in addition to number, everything was excellent, incomparable; no troops in Europe were equal to the regiments of Marshal Suchet or Marshal Soult. The soldiers of the latter, the remains of armies that had been uniformly unfortunate, were, it is true, disgusted with the service; but the glory of defending the Rhine, and under the command of Napoleon himself, would have certainly converted their disgust into ardent zeal. Nor is it venturesome to say, that had the 80,000 men commanded by the Marshals Suchet and Soult been able to take up a position



between the Rhine and Paris, the allies would never have approached the walls of our capital. In order to place our Spanish army in this position, it would have been necessary to conclude a peace with the Spaniards; but this peace, which in appearance ought to have been so easily effected by restoring to the Spaniards their king and their country, was more difficult, perhaps, than that which we hoped to conclude at Mannheim. In fact, it was not sufficient that Napoleon should renounce Spain, in order that Spain should renounce him, or that he should recross the Pyrenees, in order to induce her not to cross them in company with the Portuguese and English. The punishment of offences would be slight indeed if merely ceasing to persist in them could avert their consequences.

Napoleon, as we have said, had for about two years past resolved to give up Spain, without explaining his secret reasons, of which, however, there are sufficient traces in our archives to remove any doubts the historian may entertain. Still, it was not possible that a man of his disposition would unconditionally sacrifice a conquest, and he had flattered himself the preceding year that he would be able to retain the Ebro provinces. This last illusion was at length dissolved, and he had resolved to restore Spain unconditionally to Ferdinand VII., provided this prince would sign a treaty of peace, and persuade his people to consent to the same. It is easy to imagine what the conditions of peace should be. In the first place, Ferdinand VII. and the princes detained with him at Valençay should be set at liberty; the fortresses and prisoners of war should be delivered up. On the other hand, the Spanish armies were to withdraw into Spain, and require the English to do the same. It would seem that after these mutual concessions France and Spain could have nothing more to demand of each other. But adverse circumstances perplexed this position which appeared at first sight so simple. The Spaniards panted for vengeance, and longed to retaliate on French soil the excesses that had been committed on theirs. The English, after having contributed to the deliverance of Spain, were not people likely to take their dismissal at a beck, and repass the Pyrenees at a notification from Cadiz or Madrid. Besides, an engagement existed between England and Spain, that one should not enter into negotiation without the other. In short, the Cortes, exercising at this moment the royal authority, were in no hurry to lay down their power at the feet of Ferdinand VII., and did not participate in the desire for his return, which the country as well as himself felt. In any case, the Cortes did not wish to restore his sceptre, except on condition that he should swear to observe the constitution of Cadiz. Influenced by these different motives, it might happen that neither the English nor the Spanish representatives would

consent to the ratification of a treaty signed at Valençay, for the restoration of Ferdinand, on whom they set little value. Ferdinand himself, once at liberty, might care little about the treaty that had set him free, and say that nothing was due to those who had once proved treacherous, strengthening himself with the reason formerly alleged by Francis I.; and never condemned by any *juris-consulte*, that a promise made during captivity is not binding. The conduct pursued in 1808 towards the royal family of Spain had been such that no person in Europe, not even in France, would have ventured to blame the prisoner of Valençay. Napoleon, the haughty lion, would have appeared under such circumstances like a fox caught in his own snare.

If, on the contrary, through a natural sentiment of distrust, Napoleon detained Ferdinand VII. until the treaty concluded with him should be carried to Cadiz, and ratified by the regency, it was possible that by the contrivance of the English and the Cortes this treaty might be rejected and declared void, on the plea that it was concluded in captivity, and that the ratification should be deferred until the return of the King of Spain. Ferdinand VII. would be the longer in prison, but that circumstance would annoy the English quite as little as the liberal Spaniards.

Considering the risk of seeing the treaty ignored either by Ferdinand, or by those who exercised the royal authority in his absence, the safest course might have been to send the Spanish monarch back to his kingdom. But in sending him back the question might arise, would he keep his word; of his fidelity on this point, his extreme piety might be considered a guarantee; whilst if the treaty were sent without the king, it was certain to be rejected by the English and the Cortes, both parties being most anxious to invade the south of France. M. de Caulaincourt thought it advisable to run the risk of trusting the king. Napoleon, who had no confidence in Ferdinand, and he had his private reasons for entertaining such distrust, wished to take a middle course, and after having concluded a treaty with Ferdinand, to send this treaty into Spain by a trustworthy man, who should endeavour to awaken in the breasts of the old servants of the crown the desire to see the Spanish dynasty re-established. They were to be encouraged still further by a promise that all the Spanish fortresses should be immediately restored. Moreover, the English and Spaniards, as it often happens with allies carrying on a common war, were not on good terms with each other, and it was probable that the Spaniards would not be sorry to be able to say to the English that they had no further need of them, in which case, the latter, deprived of the assistance of the Spanish armies, and having no

longer an assured line of retreat across the Pyrenees, dare not remain upon the French frontiers.

It was influenced by these considerations that Napoleon shaped his conduct with regard to Ferdinand VII. He gave orders to M. de Laforest, who had been a long time ambassador at Madrid, to repair under an assumed name to Valençay, to confer in the strictest privacy with the Spanish princes, and to propose to them the following conditions of peace—the reciprocal evacuation of territory, the return of Ferdinand VII. to Madrid, the liberation of prisoners, the retreat of the English.

Napoleon added to these many private conditions that did him honour, and which were as important to Spain as to us. The first was that Ferdinand VII. should pay to Charles IV. the pension promised by Joseph, and which had been very irregularly paid; the second condition was that he should grant a complete amnesty to those Spaniards who had espoused the cause of France; the third, that Spain should retain not only her restored continental territories, but her colonies, and that none of the latter should be ceded to Great Britain. There was nothing in these conditions which Ferdinand either as a son, a king, or a Spaniard could refuse. But another condition remained, not so easy to propose as the others, but to which Ferdinand, in his anxiety to obtain his liberty, might accede; it was that he should espouse the daughter of Joseph Bonaparte. M. de Laforest had orders to reserve this condition for the last, and to propose the alliance only at the moment when the conference should be drawing to a close. This treaty being concluded and signed, a person confided in alike by the Spanish princes and the French ambassador was selected to carry it to the regency, and these precautions were observed in order that neither the English nor the chiefs of the liberal party should have time to prevent the ratification of the treaty. This ratification once obtained, Ferdinand, accompanied by his brother, Don Carlos, and his uncle, Don Antonio, his fellow-prisoners at Valençay, should quit France to reascend the throne of Spain.

As soon as M. de Laforest had set out, Napoleon, in order that no time should be lost, sent to Lons-le-Saulnier for the Duke of San Carlos, a person of some consideration, and formerly very intimate with Ferdinand VII. Napoleon received the duke in the most friendly manner, and in a long conversation succeeded in bringing him round to his views. He then sent him off to Valençay, in order that he might second the efforts of M. de Laforest, who was doomed to meet with unexpected difficulties. That criminal Spanish business was condemned to punishments both great and small.

The appearance of M. de Laforest at Valençay occasioned

great surprise to Ferdinand VII. This prince, a prisoner during six years, with his brother and uncle, had lived in profound ignorance of what was going on in Europe, but through the medium of some French journals that had fallen into his hands, he perceived that the Spanish war was indefinitely prolonged, that, consequently, his subjects were still defending themselves, that neither was Europe cowed since this incessant war was waged against her, and he had sufficient sagacity to perceive that his cause was not entirely lost. It was besides suspected that the parish priest of Valençay, who said mass for him and heard his confession, informed him of all he had an interest in learning, and probably acquainted him with the important events of 1812 and 1813. He might then not have been very much astonished at the communications made by M. de Laforest. But adversity and imprisonment had developed in a high degree the natural characteristics of this prince—distrust and dissimulation. All the powers of his mind, and he was not deficient, he employed in watching those around him, trying to discover if they sought to injure him. He was silent, he did not act, for fear of giving any advantage to the powerful enemy, on whose will he had been dependent during so many years. To dissimulate, to deceive even, seemed to him legitimate defences against the oppression to which he was subjected; and the policy that had conducted him from Madrid to Valençay seemed to justify his conduct. His distrust had reached such a degree that he was on his guard with his most faithful servants, with those even who were detained in France for his cause, and whom he was always ready to regard as the secret agents of Napoleon. As to the rest, he was not very unhappy. Going to confession, eating and drinking well, walking for exercise, incurring no danger, constituted for him a species of comfort to which he had become habituated. His mind, devoid of elasticity, had sunk beneath oppression, but in sinking had fallen back upon itself, and when an effort was made to draw him from this reserve, he obstinately resisted, like an animal at once timid and savage, whom the tenderest caresses cannot coax from his den. His brother, Don Carlos, was more lively without being more frank; his uncle was almost stupid.

When M. de Laforest suddenly informed Ferdinand VII. that Napoleon was thinking of restoring his liberty and throne, his first impression was that this proceeding was a cheat, used only as a cover for some hidden perfidy. The motives alleged by M. de Laforest, who wished to avoid the avowal of our misfortunes, and which consisted in saying that Napoleon was desirous of snatching Spain from the English and the revolutionists, were not of a nature to produce the desired effect on Ferdinand, who set himself to think what dark machination

could be concealed beneath this unexpected proposition. In his first interview with the French deputy he listened quietly and spoke little, contenting himself with saying that, deprived of all communication with the external world, he knew nothing, and was consequently unable to form an opinion on any subjects; that he was in the powerful hands of Napoleon, that he was contented, that he did not seek to quit his retreat, and that he would never cease to be grateful for the manner in which he had been treated. Behold the effect that tyranny produces on those submitted to its influence! Napoleon now found himself in the position of not being able to induce Ferdinand VII. to accept either his liberty or his throne, at the very moment when it was the emperor's interest to restore him both the one and the other. M. de Laforest saw clearly that it would be necessary to leave this distrustful and timid nature time for repose and reflection. He left, intending to see him next day.

Ferdinand VII., after having conferred with his brother and uncle, and reflected within himself, clearly understood that Napoleon must be in great straits, and that the offer of restoring his throne was sincere. But before listening to a proposition that appeared so attractive, he wished to know whether it might not be a snare, and whether his enemies were not endeavouring to betray him into dangerous or dishonourable engagements. Besides, being at Valençay, void of all authority over Spain, he had reason to fear, and this fear was well founded, that he might not be able to keep the engagements to which he would be obliged to subscribe. He resolved then, by acting more openly, to assume a more regal attitude, but to be still extremely circumspect.

In revisiting Ferdinand next day, M. de Laforest found him much more composed in his demeanour, taking his place between his uncle and his brother as their hereditary master, and speaking with the gravity and dignity of a king. He did not conceal that he now began to regard the proposition made to him as serious, and that he divined the real cause, but he declared himself unable to fix on any line of conduct, deprived as he was of counsellors, and affirmed, above all, that he was without authority, for he did not know whether a treaty signed at Valençay would be accepted and executed at Madrid. However, it was easy to perceive that he would not, for trifles, break off negotiations, or reclose his prison gates, now ready to open. He was evidently very anxious. M. de Laforest having offered him the services of his old preceptor, the Canon Escoiquiz, then under surveillance at Bruges, his private secretary, Macanaz, who was under surveillance at Paris, the illustrious Palafox, a prisoner at Vincennes, and lastly, the Duke of San Carlos, immured at Lons-la-Saulnier, he seemed to have no confidence in

any of these men. It would seem that naming them at this moment was sufficient to blacken them in his opinion.

The conferences continued, and the evident sincerity of M. de Laforest, the striking simplicity of the conditions he proposed, produced in the end an effect on the mind of Ferdinand; above all, the desire of liberty exercised a powerful influence; he acquired gradually more confidence, and began to reason with great good sense on the proposals he had received. At length, the arrival of M. de San Carlos, who had seen and heard Napoleon, and could appreciate the sincerity of his intentions, swept away the last shadows of doubt that overclouded the prisoner of Valençay. Even M. de San Carlos was for a moment received with distrust by his master, but he soon made himself heard, and they then entered seriously on business. Ferdinand VII. had nothing to object to the proposition of returning into Spain, of reascending the throne, of paying a pension to his father, of keeping intact the continental and colonial territories of his ancient monarchy, even of pardoning the *afrancesados*. A marriage with the daughter of Joseph was less agreeable, but having so often solicited the hand of a Bonaparte princess, it would be too late to affect disdain; but in fact there was no marriage he would not have contracted as a means to recover his liberty and throne. The difficulty was not then in the proposed union, it came from another quarter. To his dazzled eyes were presented an infinite number of things very desirable and very much desired, and all were promised to him on condition that the Cortes or the regency should ratify the treaty he was to sign; thus what he ardently desired was made to depend on a will that was not his. He said frankly and showed clearly that what he commanded from a distance might not be executed. He spoke in an angry tone of the limits that certain men, whom he styled factious, had wished to impose on his royal authority, and did not conceal that, next to the French, he most hated the Spanish liberals. He showed that the surest way to obtain what they wished from Spain was to send him to Madrid, where nobody could have a pretext in his presence to refuse him obedience; but whilst he was detained at Valençay his subjects might allege his captivity as a pretext for affecting not to believe the commands issued in his name. More than once he swore by all that was most sacred that he would keep his word as a king, as an honest man, and as a good Christian. And soon growing very warm, he flung aside all dissimulation, and exhibited a passionate desire to be free, to leave France, to reign, all which was very natural; and endeavoured with all his might to persuade them to adopt his proposition as the only one that offered a chance of success.

However, the instructions of Napoleon being positive, all

were obliged to submit, and a treaty was concluded by which Ferdinand VII. was to return to Spain as soon as the regency should have ratified the treaty, and got it put into operation. The conditions were what we have already stated: the colonial and continental integrity of Spain, the restitution of the Spanish fortresses, the withdrawal of the French garrisons, the retreat of the Spanish and English armies beyond the Pyrenees, a general amnesty, and a pension to Charles IV. The marriage with the daughter of Joseph was not formally stipulated. Ferdinand declared that he would not contract any other, if he were free, but, he added, it was a subject that could only be discussed at Madrid.

The above-mentioned conditions having been signed on the 11th of December, the next question was who would carry the treaty to Madrid in the name of Ferdinand. The envoy was already present, it was the Duke of San Carlos himself. It was agreed that this personage should repair in the greatest haste and most profound incognito to the army at Catalonia, in order to lull the vigilance of the English, which would be excited if he passed through the headquarters of Lord Wellington. He was to endeavour to reach Madrid, and press thence to Cadiz, if the regency was still sitting there, present the treaty, and get it ratified. The Duke of San Carlos was to persuade the subjects of Ferdinand VII. who were ruling in his stead to think above all things of setting him at liberty, and to sacrifice everything for that object. He was at the same time expressly commissioned not to adhere to the constitution, or if obliged to do so, only with such reservations as would permit the breaking of any engagements he might be induced to make with rebels.

These things being arranged, the Duke of San Carlos set out from Valençay the 13th December, bearing with him the good wishes of the Spanish princes, who, having laid aside all dissimulation, testified an almost infantine impatience to be set at liberty. Satisfied as to the intentions of Napoleon, they consented to see the faithful followers whom they at first appeared to distrust, the Canon Escoiquiz, the secretary Macanaz, and the defender of Saragossa, Palafox. Flattering themselves that this latter would have more influence with the Spaniards than the Duke of San Carlos, for he ought to be reverently listened to, if they had not wholly lost the faculty of memory, he was despatched by a different route with a copy of the treaty, and instructions to get it accepted.

Nobody will be surprised to learn that Napoleon had conducted this negotiation without the cognisance of his brother Joseph, who was almost as much a prisoner at Morfontaine as Ferdinand VII. was at Valençay. Joseph, as we must remember, had received orders after the battle of Vittoria to shut himself up

at Morfontaine, not to admit any one, and not to go out, under pain of the severest penalties. Napoleon so strongly distrusted the excitable blood of the Bonapartes, even in the meekest of his brothers, that he did not wish to allow Joseph to go to Paris, lest he might throw difficulties in the way of the regency. He remembered the public commotions excited during royal minorities by the uncles and cousins of kings; he had always before his mind the picture of Marie Louise defending her son against her brothers-in-law. Notwithstanding these orders, Joseph had gone secretly to Paris, but solely for amusement, not for political intrigues. The Duke of Rovigo, interpreting to the letter the imperial orders, had signified to Joseph that if he renewed his clandestine courses he would be obliged to interfere, upon which Joseph, already very much irritated by all he had been made to suffer, appeared very indignant.

Napoleon had not seen his brother since his return to Paris. He did not, however, wish that the negotiation with Ferdinand VII., which was nearly terminated, should be known to all Europe before Joseph was made acquainted with it. He commissioned M. Roederer, his usual agent, to go to Morfontaine, and inform Joseph of all that had been done, and endeavour to persuade him to resume quietly the rank of French prince, with a handsome revenue, and become a member of the regency, serving to the best of his ability France, his last and only asylum. Joseph, on receiving this intelligence, complained bitterly of the treatment he had received, and spoke of his regal rights in a manner that would have excited a smile from a less satirical brother than Napoleon. He admitted that he had committed military errors, but not so great as was said; he declared himself ready to resign the throne of Spain, but in virtue of a treaty and on condition of receiving a territorial indemnity at Naples or Turin; nor did he seem inclined to resume the rank of French prince after having worn one of the greatest crowns in the world. His pretensions provoked an outburst of bitter sarcasms from Napoleon, some unjust and even cruel, the others well founded, but, alas! uttered too late.

"Joseph has committed military errors," cried Napoleon, after hearing M. Roederer's account of the interview, "but he does not think of them. For my part, I commit faults, I am a soldier, I may sometimes err in the exercise of my profession, but he commit faults! He is wrong to accuse himself, he has never committed any. It is true he has lost Spain, and he will never recover it. It is a decided fact, as decided as anything ever could be. Let him consult the least of my generals and he will see if it is possible to claim a single village beyond the Pyrenees. A treaty! Conditions! And with whom? In



whose name! Even if I wished to make one with Spain, I would not be listened to. The first of all conditions for obtaining peace with Europe, a condition without which it would be impossible for two negotiators to succeed, is the unconditional restitution of Spain to the Bourbons; happy if I can at this price get rid of the English, and bring up the armies of Spain to the Rhine. As to indemnifications in Italy, where shall I find them? Can I deprive Murat of his kingdom? It is doubtful if I shall be able to recall him to the duty he owes France and me. How should I be obeyed if I asked him to descend from his throne for the benefit of Joseph? As to the Roman States, I shall be forced to restore them to the Pope, and I am determined to do so. As to Tuscany, which is Eliza's; as to Piedmont, which belongs to France; as to Lombardy, where Eugène has so much difficulty in maintaining his ground, do I know how much of these I shall be left? Do I even know if any part of them will be left me? To keep France with her natural limits, I should need a series of victories; to obtain anything beyond the Alps, I should gain still more. And if I were left a kingdom in Italy, could I for Joseph's sake take it from Eugène, that brave, devoted son, who has passed his entire life under fire for me and for France, and who has never given me a single cause of complaint. Where then does Joseph expect me to find an indemnity for him? There is but one part left for him to play: it is to be a faithful brother, a solid support to my wife and my son if I am absent, more solid still if I die, and help to save the throne of France, the sole resource that henceforth remains to the Bonapartes. He shall be a prince of France, treated as my brother, as the uncle of my son, sharing consequently in all the imperial honours. If he act thus, he shall enjoy my favour and the public esteem; he shall still occupy a distinguished position, and contribute to our common welfare. If he pursue an opposite course, and he is very capable of doing so, for he can neither endure labour nor idleness; if he cause any commotion during my life, he shall be arrested, and shall finish his reign at Vincennes; if he raise disturbance after my death, let the Almighty judge him. But probably he will contribute to overthrow the throne of my son, the only throne beneath whose shadow he can find dignity, affluence, or a trace of the grandeur he seeks."

These sagacious but coarse expressions, carried backwards and forwards between Paris and Morfontaine, did not convince Joseph. He was agitated, ill, and suffering from many annoyances at the time; there were the severe sarcasms of Napoleon, a lost throne, beggared children, and his sole future prospect, obedience to the orders of an imperious brother, not tyrannical perhaps, but certainly harsh. In this depressed

state of mind he refused to take any part in what was going on at Valençay, and remained at Morfontaine, where Napoleon left him in his loneliness, saying that both he and the Spaniards could very well do without the signature of King Joseph in restoring Ferdinand VII. the throne of Spain.

This period, when so many of the Bonaparte family were losing their thrones, was one of violent domestic agitation, which, added to the rest of Napoleon's cares, tended to embitter his existence. Jerome, who had retired successively to Coblenz, to Cologne, and to Aix-la-Chapelle, was staying at the last-named place, sad and miserable. He was anxious to return to Paris lest Napoleon might forget him in arranging the approaching peace, and Napoleon, who had more affection for Jerome than for any of his brothers, refused to yield to his wishes, because it was painful to him to have his dethroned brothers constantly before his eyes, particularly as their presence revealed in the most glaring colours the advancing ruin of the French empire. But though he refused Jerome permission to come to Paris, he had much more serious cause of complaint against Murat.

The unfortunate Murat had returned to Naples with an almost broken heart and a distracted mind. Of all the princes doomed at this time to behold the dissolution of their ephemeral royalty, Murat was the most inconsolable. It seemed as if this soldier, born so remote from the throne, and to whom the possession of well-earned military glory ought to have been sufficient compensation for the loss of a crown, it seemed as if he could not now enjoy existence unless as a king. After the events of the last campaign, he could scarcely believe that Napoleon, even if he still held France, could extend his power beyond the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, or that beyond these limits he could either afford support or inflict punishment. If then he remained faithful to Napoleon he incurred the risk of not being supported, whilst there was very little chance of being punished if he deserted him. Undoubtedly by joining Prince Eugène, and bringing 30,000 well-disciplined Neapolitans to the support of the 40,000 French that were defending the Adige, there was a possibility of his disputing Italy with the Austrians, but only a possibility, not a certainty. If the two lieutenants of Napoleon were conquered, they would be quickly dethroned; if they conquered, in what position would they be? And Murat especially, what would be his fate? Sacrificed to Prince Eugène, of whom he was jealous, banished to the remotest part of the peninsula, limited to the kingdom of Naples, which would be very little worth without Sicily, and he had no certainty of being able to keep even that, for if Europe offered advantageous terms of peace which involved

the sacrifice of Murat, Napoleon would not be so good a relative and so bad a Frenchman as to refuse the sacrifice. Besides, though Murat was not endowed with a solid understanding, he was possessed of a certain acuteness, and he had often perceived that though Napoleon appreciated his valour, he set no value on his intellectual capacity, and this pointed contempt offended him mortally. Such were the considerations that had agitated, tormented the mind of Murat during his journey from Erfurth to Naples. Whilst he saw so much danger in remaining faithful to Napoleon, and so little in abandoning him, gloomy thoughts contributed to increase his agitation. He had not ceased to keep up a correspondence with the allied powers even whilst he was in the camp of Napoleon, and performing feats of valour in his service. At the moment that he quitted Naples for Dresden he had with him agents of Lord William Bentinck, the English governor of Sicily; these he abruptly dismissed when he set out for the French army—a proceeding that surprised and offended Lord William. But he did not act in the same manner towards Austria, and retained at that court Prince Cariati as Neapolitan minister, and kept at Naples the Count de Mire as Austrian minister. M. de Metternich, profiting by this double means of communication, had incessantly sought to shake the fidelity of the Neapolitan court, for he well knew that if Murat, instead of coming to the support of Prince Eugène's right, would attack that prince in the rear, Italy would be immediately lost to France and gained by Austria. Not content with trying to practise on the mind of the king, M. de Metternich had opened secret negotiations with the queen, whom he had formerly known at Paris when he was ambassador there, and had tried to make her forget her duty as a sister by exciting her feelings as a mother and a wife. Not only had he promised to leave Murat the throne of Naples without Sicily, which the English made a point of giving to the Bourbons, but he had hinted the possibility of procuring him one of the finest kingdoms of Italy. Prince Eugène and the Princess Eliza being expelled with the French, and Piedmont reconquered, it was possible, still reserving a large portion for Austria, and re-establishing the Pope at Rome, to constitute a kingdom of Central Italy, whose ruler, according to Metternich, would be the chief prince in Italy, and a second-rank European monarch. These were the arguments M. de Metternich had used, and each day with increasing success.

In short, on one hand, Murat encountered the greatest perils with Napoleon without the certainty of being supported by him in case of success; and on the other hand, the allies offered him, besides the certainty of remaining King of Naples, the hope of becoming in some sort King of Italy, and this prospect

captivated the unfortunate Murat, after having seduced the queen herself. The latter had been in the beginning the faithful representative of the French party at Naples, had resisted all the Austrian suggestions, and had endeavoured to win Murat back to Napoleon. But soon the danger increasing, she was overruled by the desire of preserving the crown for her children, she listened to the insinuations of M. de Metternich, and finished by becoming his chief agent with Murat. Wishing at the same time to give her conduct a colour in the eyes of the French minister, she pretended to have no longer any influence at the court nor with the king, and to be obliged, as an obedient wife and devoted mother, to follow the policy of the Neapolitan cabinet. Murat having returned to his kingdom, found his entire court combined to urge him into those devious ways that terminated, not in a throne, but in an ignominious death, and left upon his memory an indelible stain. This prince, born with good and generous sentiments, endowed with some intelligence and heroic bravery, had not sufficient judgment to discern that if with France he ran the double danger of being abandoned by victory and by Napoleon, there was a certainty that the allies, after having made use of and caressed him whilst they had need of him, would soon sacrifice him to the old Italian dynasties, and he should find himself thus at once dethroned and dishonoured. Not endowed with sufficient clear-sightedness to take in so distant a prospect, not possessed of principles lofty enough to prefer honour to interest, he remained some days agitated by a thousand conflicting sentiments, and finished by a deplorable defection.

Scarcely had he returned to his kingdom, than finding the queen come over to his opinion, he had resumed negotiations with the Austrian legation, and the only question he now raised was as to the extent of the advantages he could obtain. Passing suddenly, with the characteristic mobility of his nature, from the depths of despair to a delirium of ambition, he abandoned himself to the wildest fancies, and flattered himself with soon becoming king and hero of the Italian nation. In traversing Italy, he had observed one almost general disposition amongst the people—that was a desire to become independent of both France and Austria. Undoubtedly, the nobles, the priests, even the people desired the return of Austria, because that for the one it would be a restoration to their former position, and for the others, an exemption from conscription. The middle class, on the contrary, fascinated with the idea of independence, said it was well to escape from France, but not well to fall back into the hands of Austria. They did not see any reason for passing from one to the other, and becoming the plaything, the victim of foreign masters. Austria ought to be glad that Italy was no longer in the hands of France, and France that she was

no longer in the hands of Austria: the independence of the peninsula ought to be, said the bourgeoisie, a desirable object for both powers, and even more advantageous than the direct possession would be to either, for Italy, subdued by one of the two powers, would be a dangerous instrument of attack against the other, whilst for the dominant monarch, she would be only a rebellious subject, always ready to become a furious enemy.

These ideas had taken possession of the minds of the most active and enlightened among the bourgeoisie. Murat, located in the most remote part of the peninsula, at equal distance between the French and Austrians, having an interest in securing himself without betraying Napoleon, capable, with his talents and military glory, of creating an Italian army, Murat had appeared to the independents every way qualified to become their hero. He could, in fact, say to the Austrians, "I am not France;" to the French, "I am not Austria;" he could say to all, "Do not provoke me, accept me as the least hostile—or rather as the most advantageous—means of securing the end you have in view, if you understand your true interests." The partisans of independence had already surrounded Murat, and lavished upon him promises and flattery, and Murat, in the excitement of his mind, thinking of many projects, and ready to undertake all, had listened favourably to the independents, and accepted them as his agents, so that at Florence, at Boulogne, and Rome, they celebrated his praises as the saviour of Italy, and announced, in prose and verse, his heaven-sent mission.

These ideas were not analogous to the general mode of thinking adopted by the Austrians; however, they did not absolutely discourage them, but allowed Murat, under the pretext of indemnifying him for Sicily, to hope for a large accession of territory in Central Italy. Murat, who, in the wild flights of his ambition, put no bounds to his desires, began to fancy that perhaps Napoleon would afford him greater encouragement touching his new Italian kingdom than he had received from the Austrians. Having become, under the excitement of the time, more versatile than ever, he no longer perceived the danger he formerly dreaded from the French alliance, because he fancied it would afford him a greater chance of increased power, flattering himself that all the Italians would rise en masse if he promised them independence and unity. He said within himself that if Napoleon would only allow him to proclaim this independence and this unity, and permit him to become the representative of the combined conditions, he would bring to Prince Eugène's assistance, not alone the Neapolitan army, but in addition 100,000 Italians, who would all rise at his voice, and that thus he would secure his own

safety, in increasing his power, in exalting his position, and in addition to all these advantages, he would secure another, for, by being the ally of France, he could still keep in his service a large number of French officers, who constituted the principal strength of his army.

Such was the confused succession of ideas that whirled through the brain of this unhappy prince. First, in extreme dejection, he conceived the dreadful idea of abandoning France, and forming an alliance with Austria; from this idea he passed on to the ambitious hope of becoming saviour and king of Italy; and changing his views as his ambitious fancies became stronger, he in spirit abandoned Austria for France, hoping thereby to promote his projected aggrandisement. He formed the wildest schemes, and there was no defection, no alliance, to which he was not ready to give assent, according to the momentary aspect of his plans. Terrible torment that drives downward from ambition to despair; terrible torment that at Paris convulsed the mighty soul of Napoleon with tempests vast as his own genius, whilst at Naples it shook with racking fancies a kind but feeble-minded creature, endowed with no other force than the physical courage of a soldier. It was an afflicting variety of the malady that Napoleon had communicated to nearly all his followers. In fact, after having raised himself to the throne, he had made his brothers and lieutenants kings, princes, and grand-dukes, or flattered them with the hope of becoming so; witness Joseph, Louis, Jerome, Murat, Bernadotte, Berthier, and so many others, who had nearly reached the royal dignity; and if at this moment they were inclined to betray, or at least to serve him laxly, whom could he blame but himself, who had eradicated from their souls the noble love of national glory, and substituted in its stead the mean passion of personal ambition.

At this very time a personage arrived at Naples whose presence was calculated to increase the perturbation of Murat; it was the Duke of Otranto, M. Fouché, whom Napoleon had sent thither in all haste. Napoleon, in parting from Murat at Erfurth, had received from him evidences of affection that had touched but not deceived him. When it was a question of penetrating the depths of the human mind, Napoleon possessed a kind of diabolical perspicacity that nothing could escape. He had suspected, as he saw danger increasing, that Murat, that his sister even, would need to be strengthened in their duty, and that powerful influences should be opposed to the suggestions of the allies. He had therefore thought of sending to them M. Fouché, who, since the entry of the Austrians into Illyria, had ceased to be a king, and was only a pro-consul without territory, remaining unemployed at Verona. He had

judged M. Fouché the most proper confidant for Murat, considering the intrigues they had both plotted in 1809. At that time Murat and the Duke of Otranto, fearing the result of the Austrian war, had endeavoured to come to an understanding as to what was to become of the supreme power in France in case Napoleon should be killed. Under such circumstances the mutual confidence between Murat and M. Fouché must have been very great, and it was presumable that the same confidence might be re-established under circumstances not less critical. M. Fouché had therefore received orders to repair to Naples, and he arrived there at the very moment when Murat was most exposed to the influence of Austrian intrigues.

Although M. Fouché might receive the confession of a treason without being shocked, and though he was fully capable of understanding all that passed in the King of Naples' mind, still the latter seemed rather annoyed than comforted by his presence. He complained bitterly of Napoleon, spoke at great length of the services he had rendered him, and the bad treatment he had received on several occasions, especially after the retreat from Russia. He spoke, too, of Napoleon's disposition to sacrifice him if the peace of France with Europe depended on the sacrifice. He complained, in a word, as a man complains who seeks an excuse for quarrelling, nor did he open his mind fully to M. Fouché, whom he judged must be, in the present case, necessarily attached to the French cause. Murat did not affect to conceal that it depended on Napoleon to win him back by treating him better, as if, after having bestowed on him his sister and a throne, Napoleon was still his debtor. In short, M. Fouché did not acquire much influence at the court of Naples, for the voice of duty could not sound effectively from his lips, and Murat was not in a state of mind to listen to political reasons. M. Fouché represented to him, with profound sagacity, that having risen with and by Napoleon, he was doomed to prosper or to perish with him; but Murat, offended at the observation, remarked very flatly that what was true for a revolutionary regicide, such as M. Fouché, would not be true for him, a victorious soldier, indebted for everything to his sword. As to the rest, however unprofitable the presence of M. Fouché might be in other respects, it contributed at least to the resolution Murat had taken of trying to come to an understanding with Napoleon, and becoming, with his concurrence, the king of independent and united Italy. If he succeeded in winning the attention of Napoleon, his fondest wishes were realised; if he failed, he had an excuse for quarrelling. In consequence of these reflections, he proposed that Napoleon should make two divisions of Italy, giving Prince Eugène all that was on the left bank of the Po, and giving

Murat all that was on the right, that is to say, three-fourths of the peninsula; he was also to permit him to proclaim Italian independence; and on these conditions Murat promised to arrive on the Adige, not with 30,000 Neapolitans, but with 100,000 Italians. He begged Napoleon to reply immediately, for circumstances were pressing, and there was not an instant to lose if he wished to profit of the times.

Napoleon was not astonished, for he was prepared for any amount of ingratitude from the men whom he had raised to the height of worldly grandeur, but he was deeply indignant at the proposition of Murat, and justly so. Had Murat been a great politician capable of conceiving a vast moral idea such as the regeneration of Italy, his proposal might have been attributed to the warmth of a generous enthusiasm. But it was evidently only a pretext to colour over a mad ambition, or perhaps disguise an imminent treason. To demand from Napoleon as the price of his services the patrimony of the Church, which was no longer in his gift; Tuscany, the appanage of his sister; Piedmont, a French province; the Legations, which were a part of Prince Eugène's territory; to make these demands, was to ask him to strip either France or his family, or to deprive himself of these valuable possessions, which in the approaching negotiations might serve to conclude an advantageous peace, by furnishing compensations for the legitimate conquests of France, such as the Alps and the Rhine. This proposal was in some sort putting a dagger to the throat of a half-ruined brother-in-law, by trying to deprive him of territory that he ought either to leave to his family, or sacrifice for his own preservation. Besides, Europe would never have consented to such a partition of Italy; and what Murat ought to have done, if he had had good sense, would be to join Prince Eugène, to defend Italy courageously with him, to conserve to France the pledges of peace, and to secure thus for each a throne which could only be durable as long as the imperial dynasty ruled from the Alps to the Rhine. The example of Prince Eugène, who gave so noble an example of fidelity when his father-in-law furnished him a means and an excuse for joining the allies, ought to have inspired Murat with more good sense and gratitude. Napoleon felt the ill-conduct of his brother-in-law with intense bitterness. To punish this ungrateful relative appeared to him at this moment one of the sweetest fruits of victory, should he be again victorious. M. de la Besnardière, manager of foreign affairs in the absence of M. de Caulaincourt, who had set out for the future congress at Manheim, tried vainly to calm the emperor, and to persuade him that however blamable Murat might be, it was necessary under existing circumstances to temporise. Napoleon burst into a passion, and would not



listen to anything. "This man," cried he, "is at once criminal and mad; he deprives me of Italy, perhaps of more, but at the same time he destroys himself. You will see that he will be one day obliged to beg from me a home and bread (strange and terrible prophecy), but I shall live long enough, I hope, to punish his monstrous ingratitude."

Spite of the entreaties of M. de Besnardière, Napoleon would not temporise; the only concession he would make was to pass over the proposals of Murat in silence. To promise any part of what was asked, and thus consent to strip his family or France for the advantage of a madman, or to thunder forth against him the moral condemnation that he deserved, would have been a weakness or an imprudence, and Napoleon took the resolution of being silent. He allowed all the imperial family to write to Murat to point out to him his folly and his ingratitude, and the emperor wrote to Prince Eugène, recommending him to be on his guard; he sent advices to his sister in Tuscany and to General Miollis at Rome to close all the garrisons against the Neapolitan troops, if Murat, as there was reason to believe, should invade Italy under pretext of sustaining the French cause. Murat, in fact, had not yet thrown away the mask, and still declared his intention of coming to the assistance of the French army on the Adige.

Such were the numerous occupations and the severe mental conflicts in which Napoleon passed the end of November and the beginning of December. As to the rest, if from time to time he roared like a lion that receives from afar the arrows of the hunters, held aloof by fear, he exhibited neither his anxiety nor his despair. He still flattered himself that he had four months to prepare, and he hoped in these four months to be able to assemble 300,000 men between Paris and the Rhine, to join to these the entire or part of the old bands of Spain, and with these combined forces to overwhelm the coalition, or crush them in his fall. Alternately animated by hope, or meditating vengeance, he was seen active, animated, with flashing eye, walking rapidly to and fro in the presence of his anxious family, of his sorrowful ministers, and his weeping wife. Then he would stop, take his son in his arms, cover him with caresses, restore him to the empress, and as if he had found fresh strength in the sentiment of paternity, redouble his pace, uttering such phrases as—"Wait, wait, you shall soon see that my soldiers and I have not forgotten our trade. We have been conquered between the Elbe and the Rhine—conquered by being betrayed—but there will be no traitors between the Rhine and Paris, and you shall again behold the soldiers and the General of Italy. Those who will have dared to profane our frontier shall soon repent of having put a foot on French soil."

Still there was another means left, that of negotiation, and Napoleon was at length content to treat, with the natural limits of France as a basis and the conditions we have already mentioned. Unfortunately, the moment when the allies were disposed to accord the natural limits of France had passed like a flash of lightning; in the same manner as the fortunate moment had slipped by at Prague when France might have preserved all her glory of 1810. The equivocal reply to the propositions of M. de Metternich having drawn from him a formal demand as to the acceptance or rejection of the bases of Frankfort, the reply to this demand not being forwarded until the 2nd of December, and not received until the 5th, a month was thus lost, and in this month everything had changed. The allies had attained a full knowledge of their strength, their transient fit of moderation had passed, and was replaced by all the vehemence of excited passion. From every quarter of Europe the spirit of a counter-revolution was rising with tempest-like fury.

M. de Metternich, supported by the opinion of the military chiefs, who were weary of the long war, and apprehensive of the risks to which they would be exposed at the other side of the Rhine, had overcome the pride of Alexander, the rage of the Prussians, the obstinacy of the English, and had induced the allies assembled at Frankfort to accede to the propositions of which M. de St. Aignan had been the bearer to Paris. But the propositions had scarcely been despatched by the sovereigns and diplomatists than there arose a general expression of disapprobation. The suite of Alexander, composed of eminent Germans; the staff of Blucher, consisting of clubbists of the Tugend-Bund; the English representatives, in short, attached to headquarters and holding various appointments—all would have preferred any other to the course that had been adopted, and cried out for an exterminating war against France and against Napoleon; against France, to reduce her to the limits of 1790, and against Napoleon, to dethrone him and bring back the Bourbons, not alone for the advantage of these princes, but as a tribute to the principle they represented.

To accord Napoleon a respite, of which he would profit to strengthen his army, and afterwards re-establish his domination, seemed to them a most impolitic course. To leave still existing in Italy, in Germany, and other places, numerous establishments founded by Napoleon—to continue in power, princes, either parvenus like himself, or members of old dynasties, who had become his accomplices—seemed a weakness, a want of foresight, in short, a renunciation of victory at the very moment when it might have been rendered most brilliant and complete. According to these politicians, neither Prince Eugène nor Murat ought to be allowed to remain in Italy, spite of the

services that were expected from the latter—nor any member of the Bonaparte family. The Bourbons ought to be re-established at Naples, the Pope at Rome, the Austrian archdukes at Florence and Modena, the house of Savoy at Turin, the Austrians at Milan and even at Venice. In Germany, not only ought the Confederation of the Rhine, that detestable work of Napoleon's, to be destroyed, but his allies in Bavaria and Wurtemberg ought to be punished, and dispossessed without compensation of all they had acquired through France. There were some even who deserved to be punished in an exemplary manner, and amongst them was the King of Saxony, who ought to be dethroned, and replaced by the Duke of Saxe-Weimar; doing thus exactly the reverse of what had been done by Charles V. The King of Denmark deserved no better treatment, because he had persevered in opposing the designs of the coalition by refusing Norway to Bernadotte. As to the King of Westphalia, Jerome Bonaparte, his fall was already accomplished, and about that there was no more to be said. The allies ought not to remain on the right bank, they ought to cross over to the left, and seize the ancient ecclesiastical electorates, Treves, Mayence, Cologne, in short, the Austrian Low Countries, independently of Holland, which nobody could think of leaving to France. With these vast territories reconquered on both banks of the Rhine, a kingdom might be formed for Prussia, so as to render her more powerful than she had been under the great Frederick; States should be reconstituted for the princes deposed by Napoleon, such as the Princes of Hesse, Orange, Brunswick, Hanover; these friends should be loaded with goods, and with them should be formed a Germanic Confederation stronger than the ancient, more firmly united against France, headed not by the Emperor of Austria, who was considered too moderate to be made Emperor of Germany, but by a Diet that should keep alive the strongest and most anti-French feeling that could be enkindled. Such were the views of the most ardent spirits, whether amongst the allied chiefs, or amongst the secondary agents that surrounded the numerous and ambulatory court of the allied monarchs.

The English especially, having become more moderate under the influence of Parliament that did not cease to reproach the ministers with their blind hatred against France, and besides, being represented at Frankfort by one of the sagest spirits, Lord Aberdeen, the English would have rejected so many projected subversions, if, in the number, there did not happen to be one that coincided with their own views, which was depriving France of the Low Countries, that is to say, of Antwerp and Flushing. Still they scarcely dared hope for such a result, and restrained their pretensions within the limits of their hopes. It was strange that the Prussians, entertaining within their

own hearts all the sentiments of the French Revolution, had become, through hatred of the French, the most zealous promoters of the European counter-revolution. Loving liberty to a degree that alarmed their rulers, they wished, through a spirit of vengeance, to eradicate every trace of what the French Revolution had effected in Europe. They were not content with winning over their own king, they enticed the Emperor Alexander by flattery, calling him the king of kings, the supreme chief of the coalition, by attributing to him the great resolves of the war, by promising to conduct him to Paris; all of which excited the vanity of this prince to a delirious height. Alexander, complaisant by nature and by calculation, adding to his natural amiability a continual care to flatter the passions of all, cajoled the Prussians, whose courage and patriotism he did not cease to praise, in order to have them on his side against the Austrians, of whom he was jealous; he flattered the Austrians by insinuating that the safety of Europe was secured at Prague; nor did he neglect the English, whom he styled models of perseverance, the first authors of the resistance that had been offered to Napoleon, the first conquerors of this conqueror, once believed invincible. Speaking so, whilst at Frankfort, he affected to support the more moderate in their opinions, he privately encouraged the most violent, and allowed them to give free vent to their feelings, in order to attach them more closely to himself. By these means he had succeeded in keeping together the coalition which was threatened with disintegration, and acquired amongst the allies a preponderating influence. There was then with Alexander, Count de Stein, a celebrated Prussian, who found an asylum at the court of Russia from the anger of Napoleon. He possessed considerable influence both with Alexander and the allies. He had been placed at the head of a committee for the direction of German affairs, and administered, for the profit of the allied armies, the territories reconquered from France, and whose restitution to the former possessors was not accomplished or even decided. These territories were those of Saxony, Hesse, Westphalia, Brunswick, Hanover, Berg, Elberfeld, &c. As to the confederates of the Rhine, those allies that had betrayed us, this committee, not taking their defection into account, had taxed them in men and money double the amount they had formerly furnished to France. Hanover, Saxony, Hesse, Cassel, Berg, Wurtemberg, Baden, Bavaria, had been obliged to furnish a contingent of 145,000 men, and a subsidy of eighty-four million florins, the latter of which had been sent to Prussia, Russia, and Austria, in bonds bearing interest. The committee of German affairs was thus a kind of revolutionary committee, acting in the name of the public safety, and putting no bounds to its desires.

Under pretext of giving up the direction of their affairs to the Germans, to whom it was due, Alexander abandoned them to themselves, on condition that they should side with him in case of need.

An extraordinary personage, a Corsican, a stranger by temperament as well as through superiority of mind to all passions, excepting one, which was hatred, the celebrated Count Pozzo di Borgo, had taken refuge with Alexander, over whom he gradually assumed a marked ascendancy. And who was the object of this hatred which concentrated all the energies of his mind? will naturally be asked. It was that extraordinary man, like himself, a native of Corsica, and whose glory in dazzling the world had agonised the heart of Count Pozzo di Borgo. It certainly argued a rare degree of self-conceit to be jealous of such a genius as Napoleon, for it is only the great Frederick, Cæsar, Hannibal, or Alexander, if their hearts still feel the throbs of mortal emotion, who could have any pretension to be jealous of Napoleon. But how could an obscure individual, hitherto unknown, having never distinguished himself either in the field or at the bar, having been mixed up only in the insignificant squabbles of his native island—how could he possibly conceive a jealousy of the conqueror of Rivoli, of Egypt, and Austerlitz? Still it was so, for human passions spring up without waiting the permission of either God or man; they are enkindled like those fires that ravage cities and plains, and whose origin is unknown. When a man of genius leaves the country of his birth, he leaves behind either fondly devoted friends or enemies intensely jealous of his fame. The Count Pozzo was of the latter number with regard to Napoleon, but it must be admitted that on this occasion he who felt was not unworthy of him who inspired the jealousy. In fact, Heaven had accorded to Count Pozzo a genius as admirable as that of war, of eloquence, or the fine arts; he was endowed with the genius of politics, that is to say, he was gifted with that sagacity which traces human events to their causes, unravels their complications, and foresees their consequence; which discovers the best mode of avoidance or interference; a rare gift, which great minds exercise for the benefit of their country, and little ones for their personal advantage; an endowment that loses in greatness what it gains in egotism, but which must rank amongst the highest intellectual gifts, and which never allows its possessor to remain unknown, idle, or useless. Count Pozzo was, unfortunately for us, a proof of the truth of these assertions, for this man, who up to that period had enjoyed neither renown nor influence, a man who might be almost said to have no country, he it was who contributed in an extraordinary manner to the ruin of Napoleon, and consequently to ours.

He had traversed many countries for the sole purpose of injuring the man he hated; he had gone first to England, then to Austria, then to Russia and Sweden, always quitting the courts that entertained a friendly feeling towards France to repair to those that were inimical to her, and returning to the former when they had suspended relations with us, but still breathing forth wherever he went the intensity of the passion by which he was inspired. He undertook every kind of mission. Sometimes he was sent to London to obtain necessary funds, at another time he was despatched to Bernadotte, whom he despised and ruled, to bring him at once to the battlefield of Leipsic. Now, holding the post of aide-de-camp to Alexander, he exercised with his Italian accent, his lively gesticulation, his proud flashing eye, a powerful influence, justified certainly by his unequalled perspicacity and precision of judgment. This man had revealed to Alexander the sad truth touching the real condition of France, and this he had told as correctly as though he traversed the country in its length and breadth, and yet he had not set foot there for years. "Do not be alarmed," he repeated continually, "at the idea of braving on his own hearth the colossal who has so long oppressed you; you have already done the most difficult part; you have brought him from the Vistula to the banks of the Rhine. From Frankfort to Paris the distance is only a step; the difficulty nothing. The prodigious forces of France have been squandered in foreign lands; at home she has nothing; the people of France, too, are disgusted, tired of the yoke they have so long borne. March forward then without delay, march quickly; do not allow the giant breathing time; go to these Tuileries that he has made his den, and worn-out France will give him up to you without resistance. You will be astonished at the ease with which you will accomplish this work; but you must reach Paris. Your sword will have scarcely broken the chain that binds oppressed France, when she will herself deliver up to you her tyrant and yours."

It was these formidable truths, ever present to the mind of the far-seeing Count Pozzo, that obtained him the decisive influence which he wielded in the fatal 1814. Alexander took pleasure in listening to him, for he felt all his passions rise beneath the influence of the count's words; after having heard him, he forgot the moderation of M. de Metternich, and wished, like the Prussians, to march forward, to cross the Rhine, and engage Napoleon in a last and deadly struggle.

When the propositions of Frankfort became known to the principal agents of the coalition, they were thrown into a violent state of agitation, and expressed the strongest disapprobation of the proceedings. To pause was in their opinion a disastrous

weakness, for it would give the common enemy time to reconstitute his forces. To leave him France, with the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, was to secure him the means of constantly disturbing the peace of Europe. He ought to be deprived, not only of the Rhine and the Alps, but of France, where no rulers ought to be admitted but the Bourbons. Besides, it was necessary to re-establish the dynasties that had been unjustly despoiled, to re-establish the rule of right; in a word, to restore the ancient order of things in Europe. To succeed in all these objects, it was only needed to take one step; but that step should be instantly taken, without pausing to take breath, without delaying a single day.

Unfortunately, letters from France, the reports of secret agents, and information furnished by the friends of the house of Bourbon, confirmed these rumours, and unveiled each succeeding hour the true state of things in this same month of November which Napoleon had lost in equivocal parleying, instead of employing it in positive replies which would have been binding on the authors of the Frankfort propositions. A graver event, and one certainly more easy to foresee, now occurred. It served to give a new colour to affairs, and induced England, that had lately appeared less violent, to join the most ardent of Napoleon's opponents. The event to which we allude occurred in Holland.

Holland had submitted to Napoleon in 1810, when he had decreed the union of this country with France. She had submitted, in the first place, because at that period Napoleon was irresistible, and besides, many different interests had found momentary advantages in the union. The Dutch revolutionists, the Catholics, the merchants, had submitted to a revolution, which to one party represented the expulsion of the house of Orange, to another the depression of Protestantism, and to a third, commercial annexation with the greatest empire in the world. Perhaps that under a better system of politics, and with the blessing of peace, these diverse interests might have ultimately found beneath the imperial sceptre a contentedness that would have silenced the voice of national independence; but it was far different. The chief treasurer, Lebrun, continued, like King Louis, to prefer the Orange party, who were rich and noble, to the patriots who were neither. The quarrel with the Pope alienated the Catholics in Holland as well as in France. The maritime war reduced the merchants to deep distress, which soon spread to the other classes of society, and affected the humbler classes most. Smuggling being tolerated under King Louis, afforded some amelioration to the scourges of war; but the French custom-house officers having, since the union, deprived the Dutch commerce of this advantage, the evil

had reached its height. The maritime inscription with the conscription being introduced into the country added new afflictions to the universal distress, and then the spirit of patriotism burst forth with renewed violence. In 1813, Hamburg and the Hanseatic provinces having thrown off the imperial yoke, the commotion extended to Holland, and called forth rigorous measures to stay its effects. 'A certain number of unhappy creatures were condemned to the galleys or to death; six were executed at Saardam, four at Leyden, one at the Hague, and two at Rotterdam. These measures, instead of calming the public excitement, tended to increase it. The battles of Lutzen and Bautzen restrained for a moment without appeasing the discontent which the battles of Leipsic had called forth in all its original strength. The chief treasurer, Lebrun, personally opposed to rigorous measures, had tried to keep well with everybody, but had only succeeded in getting credit for good but powerless intentions. General Molitor, commander of the troops, had won universal respect as a strict and upright soldier, who never profited of the force at his disposal for his private advantage. Notwithstanding the tact of the civil and military chiefs, the Dutch were determined, at the first opportunity, to send off both the one and the other, without, however, offering them any violence. But the custom-house officers and the police, whom they detested, they were determined to massacre. Whilst things were in this state, numerous English emissaries in the interests of the house of Orange were traversing Holland, promising the support of England to the people if they rose. The latter replied, that at the first appearance of an armed force they would proclaim the house of Orange, a family so long unpopular, but on which the hopes and wishes of the country were now centred. But an armed force was necessary. The English had certainly some thousand men ready to embark, but access to the roads was intercepted by formidable batteries, or by fleets riding at anchor. Admiral Missiessy, with the Antwerp squadron, defended the mouths of the Schelde and the Meuse; Admiral Verhuel, with the Texel squadron, defended the entrance to the Zuyder Zee. It was then only by land that any assistance could be rendered to the Dutch. Bernadotte had been commissioned, on leaving Leipsic, to deliver Hamburg, Bremen, and Amsterdam, by the aid of the army du Nord, but he had done nothing. He had led his entire force towards Holstein, for the purpose of reducing Denmark, and forcing the king to give up Norway. With this intention, and trying to get rid of Marshal Davout, who was the chief stay of the Danes, he concluded a treaty with him for the free evacuation of Hamburg, which left the marshal at liberty to return to Holland with 40,000 men. On



the reception of this intelligence, the English and Austrian agents uttered loud exclamations, the former because they did not wish that 40,000 French should be sent into Holland, and the latter because the cabinet of Vienna, at a time when they were labouring to propagate the system of mediation, had formed an alliance with Denmark, and taken it under their protection. Both parties demanded that Bernadotte should be deprived of the command of those 80,000 men whom he turned to his own private advantage; but Alexander, who had become strongly attached to Bernadotte since they had jointly arranged the Finland affair, had moderated the general irritation, and the Swedish prince was only commanded to send a Russian and Prussian corps to Holland, which was done about the beginning of November.

At the approach of this auxiliary force, the Dutch had ceased to dissimulate. The entire force at General Molitor's command only consisted of some skeleton battalions, containing at most 3000 men, 500 or 600 French gendarmes, a handful of custom-house officers, universally detested, though very honest men, 500 faithful Swiss, who had not a little contributed to excite the public indignation, and lastly, a foreign regiment, well disciplined, but in which there were 800 Russians, 600 Austrians, and 600 Prussians. This force was not competent either by numerical strength or the organisation of the troops to hold the country. Admiral Verhuel commanded at Texel 1500 Spaniards, who at the first signal might revolt, and force him to retire on board his ships.

The corps of Bulow, despatched by Bernadotte, having appeared on the Yssel, General Molitor issued from Amsterdam with all his disposable forces, and took up a position at Utrecht to guard the line from Naarden to Gorcum. This was the signal for insurrection. The Orangists, having assaulted the fishermen, the sailors, and the peasants, entered Amsterdam on the evening of the 15th November, preceded by women and children, and bearing the flag of the house of Orange. At this sight all the populace rose, and during the night burned the barracks situate on the quays, where the custom-house officers and the agents of the French police lived. The populace committed no offence against the high functionaries, nor against the chief treasurer; they contented themselves with merely parading the insurrectionary flag beneath his windows. The only force that remained to the chief treasurer was about fifty gendarmes, faithful, indeed, but powerless against so general a movement. He summoned during the night the principal members of the rich commercial aristocracy, upon whom he had depended for support. He found them polite but cold, and perceived that if through prudence they

had submitted to a powerful government that humoured them, they returned at the first opportunity to a government that corresponded with their tastes and aristocratic habits. Seeing there was nothing to hope from these, the chief treasurer stepped into his carriage, and repaired to Utrecht, where he met General Molitor, then threatened in front by a force of 20,000 Russians and Prussians, attacked right, left, and rear by insurrections of all kinds, and having at the utmost not more than 4000 men under his command. General Molitor, in order not to be cut off from Belgium, soon retired to the Wahal, accompanied by the chief treasurer, who had experienced no worse treatment than a few popular hisses. Dating from this time, there was not a city in Holland that was not revolutionised. Leyden, the Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht, established regencies almost entirely composed of Orangists, and soon the Prince of Orange, after having disembarked in Holland, entered Amsterdam amidst acclamations. It was announced that Holland, without defining the form of government, would again place herself under the protection of that ancient house, beneath whose rule she had passed through the most important crises of her history. As to the rest, few excesses were committed, and these were directed against the custom-house officers, or the receivers of the *droits réunis*, who certainly ought not to have been made to expiate the faults of their government. The populace of the great cities, violent and fickle as usual, applauded the restoration of the Princes of Orange as warmly as they had applauded their fall, and the enlightened patriots tolerated their return as the termination of a foreign despotism. With the exception of Admiral Missiessy with the Schelde fleet, and Admiral Verhuel with the Texel fleet, all Holland recognised the house of Orange. The English landed General Graham at the head of 6000 men.

Any reflecting person could easily have foreseen in these events a dark prognostic for France herself. It was a ray of light to the English. This spontaneous revolution, which at the first appearance of the so-called emancipating bayonets burst forth, and almost without violence, by an irresistible impulse, overturned the recent creations of the French empire, to re-establish the ancient order of things, showed the English that the same changes might be wrought elsewhere. On all sides, secret agents—merchants who went frequently from Holland to Belgium, Belgians pursued by the French police, all gave the same accounts, and said that if the allied troops would advance rapidly on Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, they would find the people everywhere disposed to revolt against a government which during the past fifteen years had oppressed them by the conscription, the *droits réunis*, and a maritime war ;

that besides they would find the fortresses without arms, without men, and without provisions; that the magnificent Antwerp fleet would belong to whoever would seize it; and in fine, that to secure success, the allies had only to advance. So much was not needed to rouse the British passions, and induce the English government to adopt new and decisive resolutions. The reinforcements destined for Holland were immediately prepared; General Graham and the Russian and Prussian generals received orders to march at once on Antwerp; earnest remonstrances were addressed to Bernadotte requesting that he would cease to occupy himself with Denmark, and march with all his forces into the Low Countries, trusting to the allies to secure him Norway as they had promised. Lastly, Lord Aberdeen received fresh instructions relative to the basis of a future peace.

The Frankfort propositions detailed in the note given to M. de St. Aignan, and in the subsequent letters of M. de Metternich, had caused great dissatisfaction in London. The people there could not understand like those at Frankfort the danger involved in the passage of the Rhine. The Londoners were astonished that the campaign finished at Leipsic, and they could not understand why the armies should stop short on a road that seemed so promising, and whose termination presented such great advantages. England found the proposition very indigestible of leaving France her natural limits, that is to say, the Schelde and Antwerp, and she regarded it as a duty on the part of the allies to deliver her from the disagreeable and constantly threatening presence of a French fleet at Flushing. Russia had found the existence of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw obnoxious; all Germany had desired the removal of the French from Hamburg, Bremen, and Magdeburg; Austria did not wish their presence at Laybach and Trieste. All these desires had been satisfied. Should England be the only power whose wishes were to remain ungratified? And had she not a right to demand that the war should be continued, if a few additional efforts could deliver her from the presence of the French at Antwerp? The English politicians did not certainly approve all the subversive projects of the more excited members of the coalition, such as the dethronement of the kings of Saxony and Denmark, but they adopted amongst those projects those which suited England, and those which would oblige France to retire from Gorcum to Lille, or at least from Gorcum to Brussels and Ghent. In recovering Antwerp and Flushing, a combination was presented, highly agreeable to England, which was to render Holland sufficiently powerful to oppose France; and the English ardently wished that the house of Orange could join the ancient United Provinces to the Austrian Low Countries.

This combination was become an object of the most passionate desires of the English, since the spontaneous insurrection of Holland, which, it was said, would be soon imitated in Belgium, had revealed the possibility of pushing still further the advantages gained over Napoleon.

The instructions Lord Aberdeen had received to adhere to the Frankfort propositions were already a little out of date. The British Cabinet modified these instructions, and recommended their minister not to consider himself bound by the propositions of Frankfort. They prescribed to him as the formal conditions of England—the continuation of the war, the retirement of France within the limits of 1790, and an absolute silence in all treaties of peace touching maritime rights. It was not said that England would carry the war to such an extremity as to dethrone Napoleon, though this result would be the most agreeable to the secret wishes of the English people; but this wish was not expressed, because England had pledged herself to treat with the head of the French empire, and it would have been a shocking inconsistency to retract this engagement; but it was declared in a general manner that the war should be continued until France was circumscribed within the limits of 1790.

Lord Aberdeen was commissioned, in order to entice the continental powers by the bait of money, of which they stood greatly in need, to purchase the Antwerp fleet, should the capture be effected; the purchase money would have represented a half-year's subsidies. Lastly, to flatter Austria in particular—Austria, whose jealousy of Russia was already perceptible, Lord Aberdeen was commissioned to say to M. de Metternich, that if in some details England humoured Russia, on the whole she took part with Austria, because that on almost every point they agreed, and that England would always prefer sensible advice to the wild fancies of certain enthusiasts; but in return, England expected that Austria would vote for the consolidation of a powerful kingdom in the Low Countries, which should extend from Texel to Antwerp.

Such were the instructions sent to the British legation precisely at the moment when Napoleon decided, but too late, to accept purely and simply the Frankfort propositions. Thus the month we had lost from November to December had left all the powers time to reflect, especially England, that, enlightened by the insurrection in Holland, had conceived the hope and the desire of depriving France not only of Texel but of Antwerp. It is evident that a prompt and categorical adhesion given on the 16th November might have placed the allies at Frankfort in an embarrassment from which they could not have easily extricated themselves.

It is scarcely necessary to say that when these fresh instructions arrived at Frankfort, all there were prepared to receive them. All those who were desirous of advancing until Napoleon should be overcome had spoken out and demanded that no account should be taken of the overtures made to M. de St. Aignan. The Emperor Alexander was only too well disposed to coincide in these views, through resentment against Napoleon as well as through the exuberance of his pride. To make a triumphant entry into Paris would be a revenge for the destruction of Moscow, that transported him with joy. Count Pozzo excited him by repeating that what had taken place in Holland would be reproduced in Belgium and in France, if the allies hastened—if they boldly crossed the Rhine—if, in a word, they did not allow the common enemy time to breathe. The Prussians, ever spurred on by hate, ardently desired to advance. Blücher said, that for his part, were he free to act, he would advance to Paris. The Austrians even, though highly sensitive to the dangers to which they would be exposed beyond the Rhine, did not deny that vast advantages might be reaped there. Whilst England was endeavouring to gain Antwerp for the house of Orange, they could gain Italy for themselves and their archdukes. There was no lack of motives for continuing the war, although in the case of the Austrians the danger of fresh risks was united to the vexation of seeing the ill-disguised preponderance of the Russians, and the brutal violence of the Prussians. But there was in this question a decisive reason for them as for every one else, which was the wish of England—England that paid the allies, and who, by her victories in Spain, had acquired a continental importance that she had never before possessed; and there was, besides, her all-powerful fleet. In short, she held the balance between the contending powers, and could make it turn on which side she pleased. It was consequently decided that the war should be pursued without relaxation. Prussia was moved to this resolution by a motive of vengeance; Russia through vanity; Austria through a selfish compliance with England; and England through the various motives that gave her an interest in the Schelde; all were urged by the impulsion of events which were hurrying to the close a struggle so old, so embittered, so implacable. On the 10th December, M. de Metternich replied to the note in which M. de Caulaincourt had adhered purely and simply to the message of M. de St. Aignan. The purport of the reply was that France was rather late in her acceptance of the Frankfort propositions, but that nevertheless he would communicate this tardy acceptance to the allies. He did not say whether in consequence of these communications military operations would be suspended, and as it had never been agreed since the rupture

at Prague, that negotiations, in case they were resumed, should cause a suspension of the war, the allies might, without violating any engagement, continue to advance, provided they continued their pacific policy. Therefore the pretended despatch of the French reply to the allied courts left sufficient time for action without exhibiting extraordinary inconsistency.

However, as England wished to carry on the war for the attainment of an object which was solely to her own advantage, it was but reasonable she should pay the expenses of the late campaign, and as all the belligerents were deficient in the money needed for these immense armaments, it was decided that England should be asked for new subsidies; and in order to point out the largeness of the amount needed, and the necessity of an immediate supply, there was sent to London a man who had already played an important part in the councils of the allies—Count Pozzo. He set out for the purpose of laying before the British minister the budget of the winter campaign.

But in the hypothesis of an immediate resumption of hostilities, the question of what would be the best plan to adopt awakened serious consideration, and might give rise to grave dissensions in a coalition where the interests and the vanity of the different parties were in direct opposition, and where even the imperative need of conservation only kept up a harmony more apparent than real. Besides that, the allied forces were considerably reduced by the intensity of the struggle; they were also divided by the diversity of the objects that each had in view. The corps of Kleist, Klenau, Tauenzien, Benningsen, that had all taken part in the formidable affair of Leipsic, were left behind to blockade the Elbe fortresses. Bernadotte, with the Swedes, with the Prussians of Bulow, with the Russians of Wintzingerode, under pretext of opposing Marshal Davout, had deviated from the principal object of the war, in order to snatch Norway from the Danes. This proceeding had deeply exasperated the Austrians, under whose protection the Danes were, and excited a general distrust of Alexander's sincerity, who was accused of encouraging Bernadotte under-hand, whilst he publicly blamed him. It was with difficulty that the new Swedish prince could be induced to give a detachment for the re-establishment of the house of Orange. There remained then on the Rhine only the army of the Prince Schwarzenberg, quartered between Frankfort and Bâle, and that of Marshal Blücher, stationed between Frankfort and Coblenz, having in their ranks Bavarians, Badeners, and Wurtembergers. After the adjunction of the latter, and the losses of the campaign, the two armies were estimated at from 220,000 to 230,000 disposable men. It is true that the new German contingents having replaced the troops that were blockading the fortresses,

and Bernadotte being recalled to add his forces to the main body, the allies could now number on the Rhine 220,000 men; they hoped to raise numerous recruits in Poland, Prussia, and Austria; they had about 70,000 men in Italy, 100,000 on the Spanish frontiers, so that they would be able to attack France in March and April with 600,000 men. But for the moment they could only collect 220,000 men, of whom 160,000 were Austrians, Russians, Prussians, and Bavarians, under the Prince of Schwarzenberg, and 60,000 Prussians, Russians, Wurtembergers, Hessians, and Badeners, under Marshal Blucher. It was a daring enterprise, that of crossing the Rhine in front of Napoleon with such forces; but according to the accounts received, he had not more than 80,000 men, and it was therefore not believed imprudent to encounter him with 220,000. The allies would have been still more determined had they known that he had not a force of more than 60,000 men to oppose a sudden invasion.

Still, the most enlightened personages at Frankfort looked with suspicion on the reports furnished by the agents of the coalition; they could not believe that Napoleon had not at least 100,000 men under arms. They insisted, therefore, on the necessity of acting with the greatest prudence in the attempt to enter France. On this occasion each had a plan of his own; the Prussians and Russians had one, the Austrians another, all inspired by the desire, so common in war, of drawing round themselves the main body of the forces, and so becoming the centre of operations. The Prussians wished, with 180,000 men out of the 220,000, to cross the Rhine between Coblenz and Mayence, whilst another body should cross between Mayence and Strasburg; that they should advance boldly in the midst of the fortresses that defended this part of France, such as Coblenz, Mayence, Landau, Strasburg, in the first line; Mezières, Montmedy, Luxembourg, Thionville, Metz, in the second line; they asserted that these fortresses could be quickly captured from the French if they had only left small garrisons there, but if, on the contrary, in order to guard the fortresses, they had weakened the main body of the army, this weakness should be profited of; the invaders should attack the main body, which they would be certain to defeat, and drive the remnant back to Paris, passing over the fortresses, which they could at a later period attack with the different corps called from the banks of the Elbe. The Prussian staff considered this plan of operation as both the most scientific and the most daring, for, in one case, they would secure the fortresses, and so establish strongholds for themselves as they advanced; in the other, they would perhaps reach Paris in a few days' march.

The Austrians had another plan, dictated also by their private views, but perfectly rational, at least to judge by the results. They thought it would be imprudent to get entangled in this labyrinth of fortresses extending from Strasburg to Coblentz, from Metz to Mezières. They said this would be to *take the bull by the horns*. They maintained that without exhausting his resources, Napoleon would content himself with putting the fortresses in a position to resist a *coup de main*, and that he would himself be found manœuvring between them with his concentrated forces, ready to fall upon the allied army; they also asserted that the allies would be more weakened by blockading these fortresses than Napoleon would be by defending them. The Austrians proposed a plan of operations radically different. The weak side of France was not, in their opinion, the north-east, from Strasburg to Coblentz, from Metz to Mezières, where she was protected by several rivers and immense fortifications; her weak point was due east, along the Jura, where, reckoning on the neutrality of the Swiss, she had never thought of erecting defences. The best plan, then, would be to take the road to Bâle, and cross the Rhine at that point, where it never freezes, to traverse Switzerland, that was crying aloud for deliverance, and thus take France in the rear, a proceeding that would be productive of many advantages. It would cut off France from Italy, and deprive her of the assistance she might receive if Napoleon recalled Prince Eugène, and at the same time it would so isolate this prince that he must succumb by the mere fact of his isolation.

It is easy to divine the motives which, independent of the real excellence of this plan, induced Austria to forfeit it. She wished to penetrate into Switzerland, to re-establish her influence there, and not alone deprive France of the assistance of Italy, but Italy of the succours of France. Switzerland was, in fact, in a state of extraordinary fermentation; and disposed to imitate the example of Holland, with this difference, that there was in Switzerland a very strong French party with well-founded and legitimate pretensions. The cantons formerly dominant—and amongst these were to be found some of the democratic as well as the aristocratic, for ambition is not inherent to one principle more than another—these cantons, in short, flattered themselves they could recover the territory they formerly ruled. The little cantons aspired to possess, as formerly, the Italian bailiwicks, Vatteline and Valais; Berne was anxious to possess the Pays de Vaud; Argovie had the same designs with regard to Porentruy; the aristocratic families remembered with regret the authority they once exercised over the middle classes. On the contrary, the territory formerly



subject, the classes anciently oppressed, did not wish, on any terms, to submit again to their former masters; deplorable divisions, to which Napoleon had put a termination by the act of mediation. Unfortunately this noble act, worthy of the time when he concluded the Concordat, the peace of Amiens, and the peace of Lunéville, had been soon disfigured, like all the others, by his infractive genius. He had filled Switzerland with his custom-house officers, and even with his soldiers; he occupied the Tessin with a detachment of the Italian army, which was a strong argument against Swiss neutrality. Moreover, in closely blockading Switzerland to prevent smuggling, he had, in certain manufacturing cantons, caused the labourers' wages to fall from 15 to 5 sous per day, and had rendered Switzerland as wretched as Holland. However, these evils had not made the liberated territories forget their independence, and if there were some of the ancient régime who cried out for the invaders, there was a party of the new school who opposed them with all their might. Switzerland was at this epoch the only country that Napoleon had not entirely disgusted with French influence and the principles of our Revolution. The struggle was therefore obstinate and intense between the two parties. The partisans of the old régime pressed Austria to advance into their country; and she desired nothing more earnestly than to gratify them, and to adopt a procedure that would restore her influence in Switzerland by re-establishing there the aristocratic power, and would secure her rule in Italy by cutting it off at the present moment from French aid.

The Prussians and Russians found fault with this plan; in the first place, because it was dictated by the private interests of Austria, and would turn the allied army from the most direct route to Paris, and necessitate a wide detour, besides separating the main body of the army into many divisions, for it was absolutely necessary to keep an army in the Low Countries, and an intermediary army in the direction of Coblenz and Mayence, which, with the proposed army for entering by the Jura, would cause three divisions, and give Napoleon an opportunity of exercising his favourite tactics, and engaging his enemies in succession.

The English, who were generally disposed to take part with the Austrians against the Prussians and Russians, and who were, besides, offended at the authority assumed by Alexander, showed themselves favourably inclined to the plan of Prince Schwarzenberg. In addition to these reasons, they had especial need of the Austrians to establish the kingdom of the Low Countries, and were extremely desirous of withdrawing Switzerland from the influence of France. The Emperor Alexander, on the contrary, rejected the Austrian project from a variety

of motives. Although at Frankfort the allies overwhelmed each other with protestations of fidelity and devotedness, through fear of seeing the coalition dissolved; although Alexander added to his protestations a certain coquetry of manner, which, however innocent in his youth, had become tinctured with craft as he advanced in life: in short, notwithstanding all these flattering externals, the allies were frequently on the point of coming to a rupture, and especially in a recent affair touching Bernadotte, whom the English accused of having totally neglected Holland, whilst the Austrians accused him of having outraged Denmark, and the Russians, though outwardly disavowing his acts, were suspected of encouraging him in secret. Alexander, openly convicted of duplicity, had exhibited considerable ill-humour, and was especially disposed to quarrel with the Austrians, who had on this occasion unveiled his secret plottings. Moreover, though flattering in presence of the allies the violent party that advocated the extirpation of every trace of the French Revolution, he flattered at the same time the Poles, and the German and Swiss liberals. He was thus a counter-revolutionist with some, and a liberal with the others, as much through sagacious foresight as through mobility of disposition; still his real inclinations were towards liberal principles, through opposition to the despotism of Napoleon, and as a consequence of his education. Brought up, in fact, by a Swiss colonel, Laharpe, having had at his court, for the education of his sisters, governesses of the same nation, he had listened to their supplications, had appeared touched by them, and had protested that he would never allow a counter-revolution to be effected in Switzerland.

This question had finished by rendering the allies uneasy as to the continuance of the coalition. However, Austria being determined on the plan of turning the fortresses, and marching at least as far as Bâle, and having obtained, thanks to the English, a majority of voices, she had promised not to violate the Swiss neutrality, and to be content with approaching the frontiers, adding that if the Swiss rose spontaneously and appealed to the allies, they could not refuse to pass through gates that opened of their own accord. Alexander had not positively disputed this reasoning; he had contented himself with denying that the Swiss demanded the violation of their frontier, and had consented to a general movement towards Bâle, on the conditions we have stated.

Consequently, from the 10th to the 20th of December, all the details of the march beyond the Rhine were regulated. It was agreed that the military operations should be continued without pausing to negotiate; that Blücher, with the corps of York, Sacken, and Langeron, with the Wurtembergers and the

Badeners, comprising about 60,000 men, should prepare the passage of the Rhine between Coblentz and Mayence, and should advance afterwards amongst the French fortresses; that at the same time, the grand army of Prince Schwarzenberg, composed of Austrians, Bavarians, Russians, and Prussian and Russian guards, comprising nearly 160,000 men, should advance to Bâle, and cross the Rhine in the vicinity of this city or at Bâle itself, if the Swiss should put an end to all scruples by opening the gates themselves. The allies would thus turn the French defences by penetrating through Huningue, Bâfort, and Langres. These principles of action having been acceded to, the army marched forward. Blucher concentrated his forces between Mayence and Coblentz; the Prince of Schwarzenberg directed his course towards Switzerland, advancing to Bâle by Strasburg. The sovereigns and the diplomatists quitted Frankfurt for Fribourg.

The Swiss Diet, of whom the majority were sagacious men, who though they regretted the excesses Napoleon had committed in the days of his power, still retained a grateful recollection of his benefits, and did not desire either a counter-revolution or a foreign invasion—the Diet had sent agents to Paris, requiring that France should recognise the Swiss neutrality and efface every trace of the acts that had rendered the neutrality illusory. Napoleon, obliged by circumstances to receive these demands, had at first withdrawn his troops from Tessin, and then declared that he looked upon Swiss neutrality as an essential principle of European law, which he had pledged himself solemnly to respect, and that he saw in his title of “Mediator of the Swiss Confederation” only a title commemorative of the services rendered by France to Switzerland, but not in any sense a title conferring any real power.

The Diet, armed with this declaration, had immediately despatched two deputies to the allied sovereigns, to ask that they, in their turn, should recognise a neutrality that France admitted in so explicit a manner. To this proceeding the Diet joined another, which would have been very wise if it had been seriously meant, and which consisted in assembling a federal army of 12,000 men, stationed between Bâle and Schaffhouse, under the command of M. de Watteville. Whilst they acted thus, the principal families in the Grisons, in the little cantons, and Berne, had sent secret emissaries to each of the sovereigns, saying that the Diet was a fallacious, an usurping authority, on which they set no value; and that the allies ought immediately to cross the Helvetic frontier to aid the true and only legitimate authority, that of past times, and re-establish it for the benefit of the allies.

And as the Swiss uttered speeches of a twofold character,

so also did the allied powers. In public, they said to the representatives of the Diet, that they regarded Swiss neutrality as an important principle of European law, and that they would endeavour for the future to render it inviolate; that for the present, without meditating any infraction of this neutrality, they could not pledge themselves to respect in every case a principle so often violated by France, and feebly defended by Switzerland herself. They cited, in support of this reasoning, the occupation of Tessin, the title of Mediator assumed by Napoleon, the regiments in the service of France that had lately been recruited, and in short, an event little noted, the borrowing of the Swiss territory, made by the Boudet division in 1813, in order to pass into Germany. They did not speak more explicitly as to how far these precedents would influence the conduct of the allies; they limited themselves to establishing their titles without saying they would use them. Underhand, they insinuated to the Grisons, to the little cantons, to the people of Berne, that they ought to rise and overturn the Diet, that in this case the allied armies would enter into Switzerland, and *en passant*, restore to the Swiss Vattelina, the Italian bailiwicks, Valais, the Pays de Vaud, Porentruy, &c.

The reasons alleged by the diplomatists of the coalition had not great weight, for Tessin was evacuated, and its occupation had been, after all, only an insignificant punishment for flagrant acts of smuggling; the title of Mediator was only an act of gratitude on the part of the Swiss, entailing no dependence whatsoever on France; in short, the admission of the capitulated regiments into the service of the different powers had not been regarded at any period as a violation of neutrality. But in this great European conflict law was only a vain word, and on the 19th of December, spite of repeated assurances to the Emperor Alexander that the allies would not enter Switzerland without being invited thither, Prince Schwarzenberg approached the bridge of Bâle; and took up a position in front of the Swiss troops under General Watteville. The Austrian generalissimo expected every moment an insurrection at Berne, which having overturned the Diet and set up a new government, he might then say he was summoned by the Swiss themselves. Nevertheless, weary of waiting, the Prince of Schwarzenberg proceeded on the 21st of December to cross the bridge of Bâle, and the commander of the Swiss troops, looking upon it as impossible to resist all Europe in arms, and excusing his want of courage by his powerlessness, made a feint of protesting, and then ceded the passage without striking a blow. On the arrival of this intelligence, the movement so impatiently expected at Berne broke forth, and the Diet, which had been legally established in virtue of an excellent constitution,

and had the recommendation of twelve years' successful and tranquil legislation, was declared void. Similar movements took place in divers cantons, and the allies took advantage of these commotions which they had excited, instead of awaiting, to commit a flagrant violation of the law of nations. As to the rest, the allies issued a proclamation, in which they declared they would henceforth invariably respect Swiss neutrality—that is to say, when they would no longer need to violate it, and when it would be their interest that it should be respected.

Alexander had been deceived, and having learned some days later that the commotions upon which the allies justified their conduct, instead of preceding, had followed the invasion, he was both offended and irritated to the highest degree. But he could scarcely complain, for Austria had done to him on this occasion what he had himself done frequently, especially in the affair of the Swedes against the Danes. Moreover, it would have been still more vexatious to break with the allies than to be deceived by them, and he contented himself with complaining bitterly, and advising the Vaudois and all the subject countries to remain quiet, and that he would not permit them to be placed under the old régime. The allied armies advanced and soon inundated Switzerland and Franche-Comté; the Bavarians took their way towards Belfort, the Austrians advanced on Berne and Geneva, in order to reach Besançon and Dole by crossing the Jura. Blucher, near Mayence, waited until the Austrians should have accomplished the wide detour they had undertaken, to cross the Rhine himself. Thus, on the fatal day of the 21st of December 1813, the empire, after more than twenty years of unexampled triumphs, was, by a terrible revulsion of fortune, invaded in her turn; and France, which, far from being the criminal, had been the sufferer—France, after having severely suffered for the fault, was about to suffer severely in expiation, destined thus to be twice a victim—once of the wonderful man who had governed her gloriously but harshly, and next, victim to the monarchs who came to take vengeance on him.

Fearing above all things an insurrection of the populace, the allies, on entering into France, made every effort to tranquillise the public mind. By a declaration published at Frankfurt on the 1st of December, the allies endeavoured to show that they did not wish to detract from the greatness of France. Prince Schwarzenberg ordered that the following proclamation should everywhere precede the allied troops:—

“Frenchmen!—Victory has led the allied armies to your frontier; they wish to cross.

“We do not make war on France; but we repulse the yoke

that your government wishes to impose on our countries, which have the same claims to independence and happiness as yours.

"Magistrates, landed proprietors, labourers, remain in your houses; an enforcement of public order, a respect for private property, the most strict discipline, shall mark the passage of the allied armies. They are not animated by a spirit of vengeance; they do not wish to visit on France the numberless evils with which, during twenty years, she has overwhelmed her neighbours and the most remote countries.

"Their glory shall be to have brought to a rapid conclusion the woes of Europe. The only conquest they desire is that of peace for France, and for all Europe an assured tranquillity. We had hoped to find peace before touching French soil; we are now going to seek it there."

On learning what had occurred in Holland, and the first movement of the allies towards the Low Countries, Napoleon had felt immediately the danger of allowing himself to be attacked on this side, for it was that part of the ancient conquests of France which his enemies were most disposed to contest, and to maintain the legal, it was necessary to secure the actual possession of the country. He had therefore hastened to send thither quickly all the disposable succours at his command.

In the beginning of the negotiations, Napoleon was desirous, as we have seen, of keeping Holland, not so much in the hope of retaining it definitely, as with the intention of using it as an object of compensation. But Holland having suddenly escaped from his hands, he had sent off with the utmost expedition some forces to the Wahal. He had despatched General Rampon to Gorcum, with the national guards, raised in French Flanders, to garrison the place. He had sent the Duke of Plaisance, son of the chief treasurer, to Antwerp, with orders to enclose the Schelde squadron in the basins, to withdraw the sailors, and give them occupation, some on board the flotilla, others in the city fortifications; he was also to assemble at Antwerp the neighbouring dépôts, the conscripts, the custom-house officers, and the gendarmes returning from Holland. Napoleon had also sent General Decaen, whose services were no longer required at Catalonia, to Belgium, in order to organise there, as quickly as possible, the 1st corps, which was to be drawn, as we have seen, from the dépôts of Marshal Davout. Perceiving clearly that this corps could not be reconstituted promptly enough to avert the first approach of danger, and wishing at any price to save the line of the Wahal, Napoleon had selected in his guard all the disposable men, to march without delay into Northern Brabant. He sent first General Lefebvre-Desnoettes with 2000 light cavalry, then Generals Roguet and Barrois each

with an infantry division of the young guard; lastly, he had sent Marshal Mortier himself to Namur, at the head of the old guard. If the enemy only meditated a winter campaign in the Low Countries, Napoleon flattered himself that he could thus mar their measures, and have time afterwards to transport his guard where the danger should be most serious during the campaign. If, on the contrary, the chief efforts of the allies should be concentrated on Belgium, the guard would be already present on the principal scene of operations. The public mind being greatly agitated in Belgium, and the people much disposed to imitate the example of the Dutch, Napoleon had sent thither an excellent officer of gendarmerie, Colonel Henry (now raised to the rank of general), and already distinguished by his services in Vendée. He advanced into Belgium at the head of some hundred gendarmes chosen from the élite of that body.

Such had been the first orders given immediately after the insurrection in Holland towards the end of November. The intelligence of the passage of the Rhine, near Bâle, on the 21st of December, without confounding had still strongly stirred Napoleon's feelings, for he immediately discovered the designs of his enemies; he perceived they no longer wished to negotiate with him, that the Frankfort propositions had soon become, what at first they were not, a decoy, thanks to the fault he had committed of not taking the allies at the first word; he now saw they were determined to carry hostilities to the last extremity, even during winter, and that they were determined to finish the war with the remnants of those battalions that had contested the gigantic battlefields of Dresden, Leipsic, and Hanau. There was no other course remaining than to defend himself with what remained of the troops that had fought these same battles, adding thereto whatever he could assemble in one or two months.

It was no longer a question of employing the winter and spring in raising 600,000 men, it was now necessary to make use quickly of those that the prefects had been able to tear from our desolated fields in the months of November and December, and unfortunately the number was not considerable. The appeal to the classes of 1811, 1812, 1813, which was expected to yield 140,000 men, had only produced 80,000—good soldiers, it is true; and an appeal to the earlier classes had yielded at the utmost 30,000. Napoleon ordered that these conscripts should be distributed immediately, according to the localities in which they were placed, some in the dépôts of the old corps of Davout, situate in Belgium, others in the corps of Macdonald, Marmont, and Victor, dispersed along the Rhine. He ordered Marshal Marmont not to suffer himself to be shut up in Mayence, but to issue forth, march to this side

of the Vosges, and collect on the way the conscripts originally destined to join him at Mayence. He ordered Marshal Victor to quit Strasburg, and leave there, besides the national guards already stationed in the place, some skeleton battalions with a portion of his conscripts, and to distribute the others in the ranks of the 2nd corps, which he commanded. The conscripts destined for Italy were stopped at Grenoble and Chambéry, and ordered to Lyons, where Napoleon wished to form of the dépôts of Dauphiné, Provence, and Auvergne, an army to oppose the enemy in the passes of Switzerland and Savoy. The conscripts of Burgundy, Auvergne, Bourbonnais, Berry, Normandy, and Orleannais were ordered to Paris, to be employed there, some in the guard, the others in the dépôts that were to fall back on the capital at the approach of the invading armies. The conscripts of the south were still to journey on to Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, Nîmes, where the reserves of the two Spanish armies were being organised.

This first direction given to 110,000 men showed the use Napoleon intended to make of the short time that remained to him. The corps of Macdonald, of Marmont, of Victor were to collect as many conscripts as they could, arm, equip, and drill them, advancing slowly to Paris. Here was a sufficient force to retard at least for some days the progress of the invasion. Napoleon busied himself in creating an army of reserve, the detachments of which were to join him as they were formed. It was to be composed of the new battalions of guard, of which a portion was to be organised at Paris, and of the dépôts that were falling back on the capital, and which were to be filled with conscripts from the central provinces. It was not alone the dépôts from the Rhine that were assembled at Paris; all those that were not necessary to the defence of the eastern and southern frontiers were called thither, in order that they should be increased by as large a number as could be added. It was the old Duke of Valmy, so long superintendent of the dépôts of the Rhine, who was to discharge the same functions between the Rhine and the Seine. It was hoped that two divisions of reserve should thus be formed, and which were to be put under the command of the illustrious General Gerard, who had distinguished himself in the late campaigns. As soon as the conscripts should have arrived, be drafted into the different battalions, armed and half equipped, these two divisions were to set out to join the army, and be organised and drilled on the way. Napoleon had established in the capital clothing magazines, where he accelerated the activity of the workmen by high pay, in order that two or three thousand suits should be finished daily.

He acted in the same manner with regard to the cavalry.



who were very much needed to resist the innumerable bands of Cossacks that the enemy were about to pour into France. He made the dépôts of cavalry that were between the frontiers and Paris fall back on Versailles; those of Normandy and Picardy were also brought there, with the horse-soldiers who had returned on foot through Wesel, and the necessary orders were given to equip and mount them. All the working saddlers and coachmakers of the capital were employed to make saddles and harness, and paid ready money. The prefects of the neighbouring departments were authorised to seize all the disposable horses, with the legitimate excuse that France must be defended from a Cossack invasion. It was announced that every horse fit for service should be paid for in ready money by the general commanding the cavalry dépôt. The expenses that the treasurer could not immediately discharge were supplied from the private reserve of the Tuileries.

In short, Napoleon, foreseeing that he would be obliged to supply his deficiency in infantry by additional force in cavalry, was making formidable preparations at Vincennes. The companies of artillery that were not needed in the fortresses, the field matériel that was not indispensable, were brought to Vincennes, where, as we have already mentioned, conscripts, horses, and harness were to be collected, and where from four to five hundred cannon were to be mounted.

These arrangements, notwithstanding the activity with which they were carried out, were far from corresponding to the extent and proximity of the danger. Twelve or fifteen thousand conscripts thrown precipitately into the skeleton battalions of the guards, twenty or twenty-five thousand drafted into the dépôts concentrated at Paris, offered only a feeble resource to the marshals who were to fall back on Champagne and Burgundy, with the débris of Leipsic and Hanau. Napoleon decided, however repugnant to his feelings, to make use of the national guards. These offered ready-made soldiers, to whom in so imminent a danger it was very natural to have recourse. Napoleon ordered the prefects of Burgundy, Picardy, Normandy, Lorraine, and Brittany to appeal to those municipalities where discontent had not extinguished patriotism, and ask them to furnish select companies of national guards. The levy of 300,000 from the more remote classes, and of 160,000 men from the class of 1815, not having been, through want of time, raised in these provinces, the inhabitants had no cause to complain of too frequent appeals, nor could they refuse, whatever their political opinions might be, to make a last effort to repulse the common enemy from their native land. Napoleon appointed Paris, Meaux, Montereau, Troye as places for the rendezvous of these national guards. Alsace and Franche-

Comté were also to furnish some to occupy the defiles of the Vosges.

Unfortunately there was a want of muskets to arm these troops, for spite of the manufactories established at Paris and Versailles, fire-arms did not arrive in sufficient quantities, and there was, as we have already said, more hands than muskets, though there had been so great an expenditure of human life from the walls of Moscow to the banks of the Tagus.

One resource remained, to which Napoleon was ready to appeal without considering the sacrifices it would entail: it was that which the two armies of Spain offered, which, assembled before Paris, would have numbered 80,000 or 100,000 admirable soldiers. With this resource alone he would have the means of overpowering the allies, and forcing them back into the Rhine. But it was doubtful whether he could get them up in time. The Duke of San Carlos, who had set out for the Catalonian frontier, had crossed and gone into Spain, and nothing more had been heard of him. The unhappy Ferdinand, as anxious to quit Valençay for the Escorial as Napoleon was to bring his soldiers from the Adour, was dying of impatience; but nothing came of it. Joseph, profiting opportunely of circumstances to escape from a false position, wrote to Napoleon to say that when France was on the eve of invasion, he could not think of making conditions or demanding compensation, and he only asked to serve France, no matter in what rank or in what place. Napoleon received him at Paris, restored his rank of French prince, as well as his place in the council of regency, and decided that without giving him, as formerly, the title of "King of Spain," he should be called "King Joseph," and his wife "Queen Julia."

This arrangement, which had the advantage of re-establishing concord in the bosom of the imperial family, was, up to this time, the sole result of the negotiations of Valençay. As all the troops could not be immediately withdrawn from the Spanish frontier, Napoleon wished that a part at least should come at once. He ordered the Marshals Suchet and Soult to hold themselves ready to march with their entire armies towards the north of France; and meanwhile Marshal Suchet was to send off 12,000 of his best troops to Lyons, and Marshal Soult 14,000 or 15,000 of his best to Paris. Relays were prepared along the roads to transport the infantry by post, as had been done in former times. Undoubtedly the withdrawal of these two detachments weakened considerably the forces of the Marshals Suchet and Soult; but as these generals were only required to retard the advance of the enemy into the south of France, Napoleon hoped that with the remaining forces they would be able to effect this object. Besides, in accordance with prior

orders, they had sent to Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, and Nîmes skeleton battalions, into which the conscripts of these departments, as they were hastily raised, equipped, and armed, were drafted. It is true that hostilities having taken us by surprise there, as on other points, before the anticipated month of April, there were, instead of 60,000 men, scarcely 20,000 in the four dépôts. Such as they were, however, in our extreme danger they were not to be despised.

After having given sufficient care to the creation of these forces, Napoleon turned his thoughts to the best way of employing them. Although at the first demonstration of the enemy towards Belgium he might have supposed that their principal efforts would be directed to that quarter, still, since the passage of the Rhine at Bâle, he had no longer a doubt as to the intended course of the invasion. He saw that though the corps of Blücher was advancing from Mayence on Metz, in a north-easterly direction, still that the allies intended to bear down on the east of France with the main body of their army, turn the defences, and march through Belfort, Langres, and Troyes on Paris. Napoleon made his preparations accordingly.

He ordered Marshals Marmont and Victor, who had just left the fortresses, to march along the range of the Vosges, and contest as long as possible with the enemy the passage of these mountains, as he wished to force their ranks, or outflank them at Belfort, in order to come down on Epinal afterwards, to oppose the column that was advancing to the eastern frontier. All those who were being drilled for the young guard at Metz were to be concentrated at Epinal, under the command of Marshal Ney. The old guard, that had at first been sent on towards Belgium, now received orders to retrace their steps in the direction of Chalons-sur-Marne, and take up a position at Langres: Napoleon only left in Belgium the Roguet division, and even that was to remain only until General Decaen could combine the elements of a *corps d'armée*. The greatest efforts of the allies being directed to this side, Napoleon did not wish to leave there more than the forces indispensably necessary to oppose and retard the progress of the enemy that was advancing from the north.

In consequence of these orders, the corps of Marshals Marmont, Victor, Ney, Mortier, comprising at most 60,000 men, occupying the space between Epinal and Langres along the heights that separate Franche-Comté from Burgundy, were to dispute with the invading masses, on the east, the entrance of the valleys of the Marne, the Aube, and the Seine; whilst Napoleon, with the troops that were being equipped at Paris, and those that were arriving from Spain, was to come to their assistance and give them the support of his presence. If

Blücher, whose mission was to anticipate events, should arrive from the north-east, and advance from Metz to Paris, whilst Schwarzenberg should arrive at the same point by Langres and Troyes, Napoleon was not without resources against this new péril. Macdonald, with the 11th and 5th corps fused into one, and with the 2nd cavalry, amounting in all to 15,000 men, was to abandon the Low Countries, to keep close to Blücher, who had entered Metz, then to fall back on Chalons-sur-Marne, and join Napoleon, who, after having thrown himself on Schwarzenberg, would fall back on Blücher, supplying numerical weakness by activity, daring, and energy; in a word, doing as well as he could, carrying the same spirit into the battlefield that presided in his government—despair. Fortune pours so many favours not alone upon the brave, but on the obstinate who persevere, and who force her to be kind at any price! Thus the conqueror who had led 650,000 men into Russia, after having left 100,000 in Italy, and 300,000 in Spain, had now at his command, to resist a European combination, about 60,000 soldiers, stationed between Epinal and Langres, 15,000 falling back from Cologne to Namur, 20,000 or 30,000 ready for duty in front of Paris, and perhaps 20,000 coming from the Pyrenees! This was all that remained of his immense armies; and independent of number, what shall we say of quality? Some untrained boys, unarmed, unclothed, drafted into the ranks with some old soldiers, worn out with fatigue; but all, both young and old, having French blood in their veins; and these, led by the genius of Napoleon, were going to fight for their native land against a world in arms, and as we shall soon see, they performed prodigies of valour!

We must enumerate amongst the means of defence the army assembled on the Rhone. The enemy having shown an intention of advancing to Geneva, and as in that case, should Prince Eugène be conquered in Italy, they would be able to debouch by Savoy, it was absolutely necessary to provide for the defence of Lyons. Within the great arc of a circle which Napoleon was about to describe round Paris, manœuvring between the two invading columns, he could certainly run from Metz to Dijon, but he could not extend his arm to Lyons without leaving the capital exposed to an attack either through Autun and Auxerre, or through Moulins and Nevers. Consequently Napoleon ordered Angereau, already, no doubt, very much fatigued, but conserving some remains of energy and talent, to address the people, to assemble at Lyons the skeleton regiments, the conscripts, the national guards, and to unite these with the 10,000 that Suchet would send him from Roussillon. If this old soldier of the Revolution understood his mission, he was to throw back upon Geneva and Chambéry that portion of the

allies who should have made an attempt on Lyons; then, freed from these assailants, he was to remount the Saône by Maçon, Chalon, Gray, and attack in the rear the main body of the army, invading Burgundy. Many circumstances might arise that would furnish him an opportunity of rendering immense services to France.

Thus, in a position apparently desperate, Napoleon did not despair, and his great mind never appeared less dejected or richer in resources. Whilst he hurried on with so much activity the completion of his preparations, he had besides political measures to take, in order to combine the moral with the material means at his command. After having left the members of the Legislative Corps so long idle at Paris, he had at length resolved to assemble them. He wished to make use of this body to awaken public opinion, to turn it again in his favour, and if they could not do this, at least to stir up a general feeling about the danger of France, now threatened with a fearful disaster.

There happened on this occasion what had happened frequently before, and which will happen frequently again, that opinion, restricted for a time in its expression, becomes afterwards more intense and more tempestuous in its manifestations. Authorities that would not permit the expression of public opinion when this expression was harmless, and might even have been useful, have been obliged to suffer it inopportunately, and at a moment when, instead of criticisms, they stood in need of unconditional devotedness. Another inconvenience attendant on these tardy manifestations is, that the one party is incapable of uttering the truth, the other of hearing it; and that instead of being an assistance, this truth becomes a source of danger, and assumes, instead of a counsel, the form of a threat.

The members of the Legislative Corps having come up to Paris with hearts imbued with the sentiments prevailing in their provinces, that lay desolated by the effects of conscription, requisitions, and the arbitrary measures of the prefects, who sometimes imposed taxes of their own free will, sometimes drove into exile the rich father who refused to allow his son to join the guards, or seized the granary which the poor labourer had hidden in the wood. To these real afflictions, which were neither an invention nor a party cry, were added exaggerated notions, if such could be exaggerated, of what was passing in our armies, and these ideas were prevalent on every side, and even amongst members of the government. Recitals, in which no circumstance was softened, were heard in all directions, of the misfortunes of the last campaign, the sufferings of our soldiers, who were left dying on the roads of Saxony and Franconia; the frightful ravages made by typhus on the Rhine, and the not less horrible calamities of the Spanish war. Sympathy for these

woes was heightened when it was known how easily they might have been averted. Although the public did not know that there had been a day at Prague when a glorious peace might have been concluded, and that through a culpable obstinacy the propitious moment had been allowed to pass (this was the secret of Napoleon and M. de Bassano, who were interested in not proclaiming it, and of M. de Caulaincourt, who was too faithful a subject to reveal it), everybody was persuaded that if peace was not concluded, it was the fault of Napoleon, that the allies had always been willing to make peace with him, that it was he who had never wished to make it with them. And now the inverse was true; now Europe, emboldened by success, after having vainly wished for peace, no longer desired it, and Napoleon, now wishing for peace, could not obtain it. The public made no distinction between one period and another. They accused Napoleon of a past fault which he would never have repeated; they accused when they ought to have sustained him. Sad and fatal example of too long concealed truth! It would be better, we repeat, to acquaint a people with facts at the time they happen, for they then experience at the proper time the impressions which such information is naturally destined to produce, but by delaying the intelligence we call up sentiments inopportunately at a moment that ought to be occupied with different feelings. And so the French people ought to have been indignant six months before the period of which we speak, and at this moment they ought to have held their peace and afforded Napoleon their support. They did exactly the contrary. And such is the baseness of the human heart, that those who had appeared most humble and most dazzled by the glory of the empire, now that its prestige was passing away, were the least reserved in their condemnation.

A month passed at Paris in the midst of idleness, injurious reports, and vexatious excitement was not calculated to shed a calming influence over the members of the Legislative Corps. Every member of the government had perceived their temper of mind, and were troubled in consequence. It would be no easy task to change them. This government, so accustomed to dealing with soldiers, displayed, when it became necessary to deal with men, all the awkwardness and barbarity of despotism. To the Duke of Rovigo, as amongst his police duties, had always been confided the task of influencing the clergy or the members of the Legislative Corps as happened at the time of the council. To guess what might be the family necessities of one, or the desires of the protégés of another, and to satisfy these wishes by the presentation of places, or by other less avowable means, was a duty that the Duke de Rovigo discharged with an unscrupulous facility and a soldier-like frankness, which in those days supplied

the place of independence of character. But if this mode of proceeding succeeded with some individuals, happily, with the greater number more noble means were needed, especially when the public mind was unusually disturbed. Thus the enlightened servants of the government, seeing clearly that in the present circumstances a few personal favours would have no weight, had said that the Duke of Rovigo ought to be prevented from interfering in the affairs of the Legislative Corps. M. de Sémonville especially, the enemy of the Duke of Rovigo, whose place he was anxious to obtain, succeeded, through his friend M. de Bassano, in having this advice given to Napoleon, and Napoleon, whom the frankness of the Duke of Rovigo offended, told him very quickly that he was not to meddle again in the affairs of the great legislative bodies.

It was true that superficial means would no longer suffice when placed in juxtaposition with the long-suppressed sentiments of afflicted France. Still, in the absence of these means, where was the person who could employ honest persuasion? The clever people who thought the skill of the Duke of Rovigo savoured of vulgarity, what resource had they to offer? Alas! none, for there is no skill that can prevail against mournful truths universally and profoundly felt. It is true that a president possessed of good manners and accustomed to act on the feelings of men, enjoying at the same time the confidence of his colleagues, might have obtained some influence over them, and shown them that, though justified in being angry at the past, they ought at the actual time to aid the government with all their might, and by a decisive and patriotic effort repulse the foreign invaders. But in order to indemnify the Duke of Massa, who had been deprived of his portfolio for the advantage of M. Mole, the Legislative Corps had been deprived of all participation in the choice of its president, and the Duke of Massa had been forced upon them. He was, no doubt, a worthy and upright magistrate, worthy of all respect, but grown infirm, not acquainted with any of the members of the Legislative Corps, not known by any of them, and displeasing to them because his mere presence was one of the last examples of the capricious whims of a despotism to which the ruin of France was attributed.

This president then could do nothing to overcome the difficulties of the position, and make his colleagues feel that far above the right of complaining of their own government ought to be the duty of combining against the enemies of France. If honest and conscientious ministers could have appeared before the assembly, and in a dignified manner made the necessary avowals, beseeching all to silence their resentment and listen only to the dictates of patriotism, it would have been possible

to dispense with these suspicious means that deal only with individuals; but in the Legislative Corps all remained silent, the ministers as well as the representatives. A government orator, a secondary and irresponsible person, pronounced a prepared harangue before the legislators, who replied by a harangue of the same kind, both fulfilling a vain formality void of interest. These proceedings presented no means of allaying public feeling, of speaking to the people, of pointing out their duty, and winning their attention and credence. It will perhaps be said that a free assembly, instead of yielding assistance, would have entailed embarrassments; we shall see by what happened whether a free assembly could have been more injurious than this enslaved and degraded Legislative Corps.

The members of the Legislative Corps assembled at Paris, their hearts filled with vexation, with alarm, with bitter sentiments of every kind, which would have needed vent, but which must be suppressed, when Napoleon opened the Legislative Assembly in person on the 19th of December. Amid a glacial silence he read the following address, simply, nobly dictated, as everything was that emanated directly from himself.

"SENATORS, PRIVY COUNCILLORS, DEPUTIES,—Splendid victories have shed glory over the French arms in this campaign; unexampled defections have rendered these victories useless; everything has turned against us. France itself would be in danger were it not for the energy and union of Frenchmen.

"In these perilous circumstances my first thought was to summon you around me. My heart has need of the presence and affection of my subjects.

"I have never been elated by prosperity. Adversity would find me beyond its reach.

"I have often accorded peace to nations that had lost everything. From one portion of my conquests I have created thrones for kings, who have betrayed me.

"I have conceived and executed great designs for the prosperity and happiness of the human race.

"A monarch and a father, I understand how much peace adds to the security of thrones and the happiness of families. Negotiations have been commenced with the allied powers. I have adhered to the preliminary basis that they presented. I had hoped that before the opening of this session the congress of Manheim would have assembled; but fresh delays, noways attributable to France, have deferred this movement so ardently desired by all.

"I have ordered that all the original documents in the portfolios at my office of foreign affairs shall be laid before you. You will appoint a commission to take cognisance of them. The



speeches of my council will let you know my wishes on this subject.

"Nothing on my part opposes the re-establishment of peace. I know and I participate in the sentiments of the French, I say emphatically the French, for there is no Frenchman who would desire peace at the expense of honour.

"It is with regret that I demand from this generous people new sacrifices, but they are commanded by the noblest and dearest interests. I have been obliged to reinforce my armies by numerous levies; nations can only negotiate with security when they deploy all their military strength. An increase in the revenue becomes indispensable. What my minister of finance will propose to you is conformable to the system of finance I have established. We will meet every difficulty without having recourse to a loan, which gnaws into the future, and without paper money, the great enemy of social order.

"I am satisfied with the sentiments which under these circumstances my Italian subjects have manifested.

"Denmark and Naples have alone remained faithful to my alliance.

"The Republic of the United States of America continues with success the war against England.

"I have recognised the neutrality of the nineteen Swiss cantons.

"SENATORS, PRIVY COUNCILLORS, DEPUTIES FROM THE DEPARTMENTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE CORPS,—You are the natural organs of this throne: it belongs to you to give an example of energy that will render our generation glorious in the eyes of those yet to come. Let them not say of us, 'They have sacrificed the primary interests of the country; they have recognised the laws that England tried in vain during four centuries to impose on France.'

"My people cannot apprehend that the policy of their emperor would ever betray the national glory. For my part I feel confident that Frenchmen will ever be worthy of themselves and of me."

In this speech Napoleon announced that the documents relative to the Frankfort negotiations should be laid before the Assembly, these negotiations which seemed, no one knew why, completely broken off.

He hoped this communication would produce a useful result, the only one that could be hoped from the meeting of the Legislative Corps—it would be proof that he wished for peace, that he had frankly accepted the conditions as they had been laid down at Frankfort, and if this peace was not already signed, the fault was not attributable to him, but to the allied powers. A declaration from the Legislative Corps to this effect might

remedy, if not the exhaustion of the country, at least the general feeling of mistrust, and infuse into the minds of the people a certain amount of zeal, by persuading them that it was not to the ambition of the emperor they were about to sacrifice themselves once again, but to the necessity of defending and saving themselves. However, before dissipating the distrust of the country, it would have been necessary to dissipate that of the Legislative Corps, which could only be done by very great frankness. M. de Caulaincourt, who had nothing to fear from this frankness, advised it strongly. But Napoleon, anxious to conceal many truths, could not follow this counsel. If the single report of M. de St. Aignan were laid before the House, every one would have seen there that M. de Metternich had expressly recommended *not to act as at Prague*, that is to say, to allow the only moment in which peace could be concluded to pass unprofited of, which proved that at Prague they might have made peace and did not. If, moreover, they had produced the letter of M. de Bassano of the 16th November, it would be evident that at the very time the Frankfort propositions were made, that the French cabinet, instead of taking the allies at their word, had replied in an equivocal and ironical manner, and that it was not until the 2nd December that a formal acceptance had been given; and though the public were not aware how fatal the loss of this month had been, they would certainly have suspected that in losing it precious time had been lost, for M. de Metternich was as cold and evasive in his despatch of the 10th of December as he had been confiding and pressing in the first. Frankness might then entail serious revelations; but in addressing the representatives of the country for the purpose of obtaining their support, it would be necessary at least to speak to them frankly, acknowledging past faults, and claiming credit for present sincerity, which the letter of the 2nd December put beyond doubt, and this in order to obtain from the Legislative Corps a formal declaration that the government wished for peace, wished it on honourable terms, but did wish it.

Napoleon was willing that the communications made to the Senate should be more extensive than those made to the Legislative Corps, which were of a very restricted nature. The report of M. de St. Aignan, for example, was to be presented, with alterations that would efface all allusion to what had taken place at Prague. The letters of the 16th November and of the 2nd December were both produced, for it would be impossible in producing the document of the 2nd December to repress that of the 16th November, as the one referred to the other. As to the mode of proceeding, it was agreed that the Senate and the Legislative Corps should each nominate a

commission of five members, and that this commission should repair to the High Chancellor Cambacérès, who would lay before them the appointed documents. Meanwhile the Senate and the Legislative Corps were busy choosing commissioners to receive the communications of the government.

The Senate appointed high personages, who, without being partisans, were incapable at this moment of committing the slightest imprudence. The Senate appointed Messrs. de Fontanes, de Talleyrand, de St. Marsan, de Barbé-Marbois, de Beurnonville. These names revealed neither hostility nor complaisance. It was quite different with the Legislative Corps. The government had indirectly insinuated certain preferences, but the Assembly took no notice of these intimations. This body had hitherto been too little engaged in politics to be divided into parties, which would have served to declare each member's political opinions distinctly, and was now groping for commissioners, as it were, in the dark, and were obliged to recur to repeated scrutinies to find out what it was they exactly wished. In the first place, they rejected the candidates favoured by government; then, after mature reflection, they appointed distinguished, independent men, who enjoyed, without having caballed for it, the esteem of their colleagues. These were M. Lainé, a celebrated Bordeaux lawyer, who was formerly an ardent Revolutionist, but had afterwards adopted more moderate opinions. He was honest but impassioned; he was possessed of eloquence, studied, but brilliant and dignified. M. Raynouard, a literary man of considerable reputation, author of the tragedy of "The Templars." He was warm-hearted, intellectual, and sincere. M. Maine de Birau, a man of contemplative mind, devoted to philosophic studies, one of the savants that Napoleon accused of ideology. And lastly, Messrs. de Flaugergues and Gallois. These were less known than the others, but they were men of considerable intellect, and decided partisans of political liberty. All, on the eve of a struggle with the government, were placed, without perceiving it, on the road to *royalism* (we mean by this denomination a decided inclination for the Bourbons, with laws more or less liberal), but they had not yet arrived at the term, at least the three first-named, who, amongst the five commissioners, alone at that time enjoyed a certain reputation.

These selections having been made, each commission, headed by its president, sought an interview with the high chancellor. The commissioners deputed by the Senate were admitted first—that is to say, on the 23rd of December. The communications were made to them by M. de Caulaincourt himself. They listened to everything, said nothing, and after having heard the letters of the 16th of November and the 2nd December read, they did not entertain the slightest doubt as to the error that

had been committed in not accepting purely, and simply, and instantaneously, the Frankfort propositions. In fact, such men as MM. de Talleyrand and de Fontanes perceived at once that it was the letter of the 2nd of December which ought to have been written on the 2nd of November. M. de Fontanes was deputed to present to the Senate the report of the proceedings of the senatorial commission. It seems a strange contradiction that the communications prepared for the most experienced diplomatists were far from partaking of a serious character, but the reason was simply because they were a mere matter of form. The deputies of the Legislative Corps received the communications intended for them on the 24th, and this communication, intended for persons far less important than those for whom the first was drawn up, was destined to produce far more serious results.

As if those who had devised these communications wished as much as possible to detract from the importance of the second, it was not the minister himself, but one of his subordinates, M. d'Hauterive—certainly a man of considerable merit—who was deputed to receive the members of the Legislative Corps, and to lay before them a report of the negotiations. These commissioners, like those from the Senate, were received at the high chancellor's. Instead of public personages of high rank, and coldly attentive, there now appeared men whose faces were unknown amongst the great—men anxious for information, impassioned, listening to what was told them, but desiring and demanding more. The report being read, they asked a fresh reading, and it was not refused. Their first impression was a species of astonishment. Some minutes before, they were all convinced that if war still prevailed, it was owing to the obstinacy of Napoleon; and yet, not having before them the documents relative to the negotiations at Prague, having only the Frankfort acts, the propositions entrusted to M. de St. Aignan, the reply of M. de Bassano of the 16th of November, that of M. de Caulaincourt of the 2nd of December, they were forced to admit that on the last-named occasion Napoleon had desired peace. Had these gentlemen been a little more accustomed to diplomatic transactions, and had they known what had taken place in European cabinets from the 16th of November to the 2nd of December, and how the time lost by us had been actively employed by our enemies, they would have perceived the error that had been committed in not binding the allied powers by the immediate acceptance of their propositions. However, perceiving between the letter of the 16th of November and that of the 2nd December a positive advance in the way to peace, they were desirous of seeing a still further progress. They wished the emperor to bind himself solemnly to

make every necessary sacrifice to obtain peace; besides, they thought the proposed bases of the natural frontiers very vague—for in Holland, on the Rhine, in Italy even, there might be many points of contest—therefore the commissioners wished the emperor should positively state to them what he would yield, and this they required in order that they might afterwards repeat the statement to the Legislative Corps, that is to say, to Europe, and that then all parties should be bound, Napoleon as well as the allies. This was, in their opinion, the only means of acting on the public mind, and inducing the people to think favourably of the emperor's designs by proving to them that the efforts required of the French people were not to be expended in the attainment of unwise conquests, but in conserving the natural limits of France. M. Raynouard, with all the ardour of a southern temperament, proposed the following form of address:—

“SIRE,—You swore at your coronation to maintain the natural and necessary limits of France, which are the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees: we call upon you to be faithful to your oath, and we are willing to shed the last drop of our blood to aid you in fulfilling your obligations. But having observed your oath and secured our frontiers, neither France nor you will be longer bound by any motive, either of honour or of glory, and you will then be able to sacrifice everything to obtain the blessings of peace and to secure the interests of humanity.”

This truly original document, which was a demand for peace under the appearance of a demand for war, met the approbation of all the commissioners; but for the moment they retired, in order to have time for a little reflection, and to devise at their leisure the best mode of addressing the Legislative Corps, France, in short, all Europe.

M. d'Hanterive, who beneath a grave and rather pedantic exterior concealed an infinity of tact, made every effort to win the good graces of the different members of the commission, and to induce them to act with reserve. But when a government has recourse to publicity, it is better to submit unreservedly, and trust to the national good sense. But this cannot be done with safety, excepting where this national good sense has been trained by a long participation in public affairs, and it must be admitted that to make an appeal for the first time to such a tribunal, in delicate and dangerous circumstances, is running a great risk. It is plain that the government did not wish to tell everything nor allow everything to be told to the commissioners; but then it would have been better not to have assembled them, and yet how was it possible to demand such great sacrifices from the people without addressing to them one single word? It is not whilst maintaining such a silence

that a government has a right to demand from a people their last crown and their last man. Those who fall into the habit of making half revelations to a people concerning their affairs ought to ask themselves the question, whether a day will not arrive when everything must be made public, and whether this day of reckoning will not be precisely that when it would be desirable that the revelations should be of the least painful character.

M. d'Hauterive took especial trouble in endeavouring to persuade M. Lainé, who appeared the most influential man of the commission. He found in him, not a secret and zealous partisan of the house of Bourbon, as one would have been inclined to expect from the previous conduct of this illustrious personage, seeking to embarrass the actual government, in the hope of serving the future dynasty, but an honest man, deeply affected by the misfortunes of France and the tyrannical yoke under which she was bowed down. With regard to external policy, M. d'Hauterive found M. Lainé disposed, like his colleagues, to demand an explicit declaration of what sacrifices the emperor was resolved to make for peace, as this was, in his opinion, the only means of obtaining from France a last effort, if even at this price she was still capable of one, so exhausted were her resources. M. d'Hauterive, profiting of the advantage that a *tête-à-tête* with a man of intelligence and sincerity always affords, endeavoured to persuade M. Lainé that it was impossible to lay before the commissioners a plan of negotiation, because the government could not publicly declare what they would yield or what they would not yield, for that would be telling their secret to an enemy who did not reveal his; neither could they present an ultimatum, that being a proceeding employed only at the termination of a negotiation when it became important to put an end to designedly prolonged parleying, and when those who used it were in a position to enforce the imperative language in which it was couched.

Enlightened by these practical observations, M. Lainé promised to satisfy his colleagues on this point, and kept his word. In fact, after very warm discussions, the commissioners abandoned the demand of having laid before them a detailed enumeration of the sacrifices the emperor was willing to make for peace; but they expressly declared that France would not recede from her natural frontiers, but she claimed nothing beyond; and these sentiments being sincerely declared, it became the duty of the allies to explain themselves definitely on the Frankfort bases, which they had proposed, and which had been formally accepted by M. de Caulaincourt in his letter of the 2nd of December. This point being settled, they turned their attention to the subject of the home policy, and then the

most violent expressions were launched against the despotism under which the empire groaned. Upon this subject each individual had serious grievances to allege—taxes levied without lawful authority, horrible vexations in the administration of the laws touching conscription, insupportable abuses in collecting contributions in kind, illegal arrests, arbitrary detentions, &c. As regarded these complaints, the facts were as numerous as varied, and at the very moment when the government stood in need of the utmost devotedness from the nation, the people were in a position to tell the governing authorities, that for the patriot citizen there were two things equally sacred—his native land and the laws of his country. His native land, that portion of the earth where he was called into life, and which he is bound to defend against every invader; the laws beneath whose shelter he lives, through which he is made conscious of a public authority, and whose rigorous observance he has a right to demand. His native land and the laws of his country are two sacred objects in the estimation of the true patriot. Every citizen, in devoting himself to the one, establishes for himself the right to inquire into the administration of the others: every citizen has a right to say to a government that demands from him great sacrifices, “I will not help you to drive a foreign foe from my country, if the reward of my exertions is to be oppression from a home despotism.”

All the commissioners were unanimous on these points, and came to the resolution of drawing up a moderate but decisive declaration of their opinions. When the communications made by the government were concluded, it became the duty of the commission to make out a report for the Legislative Corps, after which they were to propose an address to the emperor. To M. Lainé was confided the task of drawing up this report, and he did so in a spirit conformable to the opinions entertained by the commissioners. The report stated that at Frankfort overtures of peace had been made to France, having for bases her natural frontiers; that on the 16th of November, France had favourably received this overture, and proposed a congress at Mannheim; that upon a second communication from M. Metternich, who did not think the acceptance of the natural frontiers had been sufficiently explicit, France formally accepted them on the 2nd of December, and that these became thenceforth the bases on which negotiations were carried on. The report said further that it was a duty the allies owed to France and to themselves, to adhere to what they had proposed, and that France, on her part, ought to shed the last drop of her blood for the maintenance of conditions so accepted. The report added that two objects of the highest consideration to every people ought to be, the integrity of the country and the main-

tenance of the laws, and on this subject the report laid before the emperor, in respectful terms and with entire confidence in his justice, an *exposé* of some acts of the public authorities of which the people had reason to complain. The tone of the report throughout was sincere, but grave and dignified.

The commissioners assembled on the 28th to submit the projected report, for as yet it was only a project, to the high chancellor and M. d'Hauterive.

The high chancellor, though believing the observations of the commissioners to be very just, was, however, alarmed at the effect this report might produce on all Europe, and still more on Napoleon himself. In the eyes of Europe it would pass for an act of indirect hostility to the government, at a moment when the most perfect union was needed between the executive and the people; with regard to Napoleon, it would offend him, and provoke acts of violence, the consequences of which at such a time might be very disagreeable. The prudent high chancellor might have been right on these two points, but why had the representatives of the country been granted only this day, this day so long deferred, to give utterance to truths that must have found expression? Still, though the commissioners uttered complaints of the gravest nature, it might have been wiser to defer them. The high chancellor endeavoured to persuade them of this, and his fine and impressive countenance, well calculated to give weight to his prudent counsels, produced some impression on his auditors. Many changes were agreed to. M. d'Hauterive obtained one especially of great importance, taking good care not to avow the motive that prompted him to solicit the concession. The letters of the 16th of November and the 2nd of December had been inserted in the report, and M. d'Hauterive feared that the public, better informed than the commissioners, might ultimately discover the real error—the too late acceptance of the Frankfort bases. He assigned as a reason for the proposed alteration that it might involve disagreeable consequences to publish documents touching a negotiation that had scarcely commenced. The copies of the letters in the report were consequently suppressed. Lastly, the high chancellor succeeded in having the complaints against the home government reduced to a few moderate phrases. In short, after having spoken of the declaration to be made to the allied powers, and of the defensive measures to be taken if this declaration were not attended to, the report added: "It is, according to the spirit of our institutions, the duty of the government to propose the means it believes most prompt and most sure to repulse the enemy, and establish peace on a durable basis. These means will be efficacious, if the French are convinced that the government no longer aspires to



any glory but that of peace; these means will be sufficient, if the French are convinced that their blood will be shed only to defend their native land and well-administered laws."

"It appears, then, indispensable to your commissioners, that at the same time that the government shall propose the most prompt measures for the safety of the State, his majesty should be petitioned to maintain the entire and steady execution of the laws that secure to individual Frenchmen the rights of liberty, of personal safety, of property, and to the nation at large the free exercise of political rights. This guarantee has appeared to your commissioners the most efficacious means of restoring to Frenchmen the energy necessary for the defence of their country, &c., &c."

Notwithstanding the extreme moderation of these phrases, the chancellor made fresh efforts to get them suppressed. M. de Caulaincourt lent his exertions; but neither could induce men indignant against the home administration to abstain from so moderate a manifestation of their feelings, particularly as they might not have another opportunity of doing so, for it was not probable that the government, which now in the hour of its defeat appealed to them, would be likely to do so, should the day of distress be succeeded by one of triumph. This was their excuse for a manifestation which, if it were ill-timed, was the fault of those who had afforded only this opportunity for the expression of their feelings, and who gave them little hope of another. The commissioners were certainly told they would be listened to another time on this subject, but they did not believe it, and had good reasons for their mistrust.

On the 29th of December, the Legislative Corps being resolved into a private committee, M. Lainé read his report, which was listened to with religious attention, and unanimously approved. M. Lainé, at the conclusion of the report, recommended the drawing up of an address to the emperor in the same spirit. It was decided by a majority of 223 votes out of 254, that the report of the commission should be printed solely for the members of the Legislative Corps, in order that they may reflect on it, and vote for the proposed address after mature deliberation. From this moment publicity was assured to the words of M. Lainé, especially amongst foreign nations, by whom they ought never to have been heard.

When the report was laid before Napoleon, he burst into violent anger on reading it, and exclaimed that he was insulted at the very moment when he stood most in need of support. He immediately summoned the privy council, and asked the ministers, with the air and tone of a man who had already taken his resolution, whether the sittings of the Legislative Corps ought to be any longer allowed. He pointed out not only

the danger of allowing such a report as that of M. Lainé's to be published, but the still greater danger of having within the walls of the capital an assembly that, at a dangerous crisis, at the approach of the enemy for example, might be guilty of some factious or imprudent manifestation which would infallibly be attended with fatal effects. Sad and wide-seeing foresight, by which it would seem that Napoleon, piercing the future, already read his own history on the page of destiny; but this foresight came too late, and was incapable of supplying a remedy. How could Napoleon now prevent that this report had come into existence, and had been read before an audience of hundreds!—how prevent that the Legislative Corps, either dissolved or adjourned, should remain at Paris, ready to combine spontaneously for the prosecution of the most dangerous schemes! How many legislative bodies have been dissolved, and have been found at a dangerous crisis more formidable than if they had continued their legitimate sittings. Be this as it may, Napoleon asked his ministers whether it would not be better immediately to adjourn the Legislative Corps—in the first place, to prevent the members putting into execution the sentiments embodied in M. Lainé's report, and secondly, to suspend the sittings of this body during a war that might only be terminated beneath the walls of Paris itself.

The Chancellor Cambacérès combated this proposition with his ordinary sagacity. The report, he said, was undoubtedly warm, and even factious; but it was done, and nothing could prevent its publication. Even should the emperor succeed in preventing the publication in France, he could not forbid it in foreign countries. The adjournment of the Legislative Corps would be a more serious circumstance than the report itself, for the public would infallibly attribute to this body sentiments much more hostile than those they really entertained. As to the annoyance that its sitting during the approaching campaign might cause, nobody could, of course, affirm that the members might not commit some imprudence; but that was an annoyance that could be provided for when the time came, without anticipating it by an ill-judged outburst. In fact, to dissolve the Legislative Corps, would be to proclaim to the world a disunion between the legislative bodies; it would be to declare that a rupture existed between France and the emperor.

Each of the ministers adopted the sentiments of the chancellor, each thought the adjournment would work more mischief than the report itself. But touching the annoyances that might arise from the assembling of the Legislative Corps during the campaign, everybody hesitated to give an opinion, and yet that was the point on which Napoleon's foresight rendered him most solicitous; for admitting the past evil to be irremediable,

he wished to provide against the future, and he pressed each of the ministers to enlighten him on this subject. Perceiving that each when he came to this part of his discourse hesitated, Napoleon interrupted the discussion, and put an end to it by a few sharp, decisive words. "You see it clearly," he said; "you all agree in recommending me moderation, but no one ventures to assure me that the deputies will not take advantage of some disastrous day, of which there are so many in war, to make spontaneously, or at the instigation of some factious leader, an insurrectionary movement, and I cannot endure such a doubt. Anything is less dangerous than such a possibility." Without listening to further remonstrance, he signed the decree which adjourned on the following day—the 31st of December—the Legislative Corps, and he ordered the Duke of Rovigo to seize at the printing-office and elsewhere every copy of M. Lainé's report, a report which has since become so famous.

The decree for adjournment being presented to the Legislative Corps, produced amongst the members a profound sensation. In a moment it converted into enemies two hundred and fifty persons, who before that were profoundly submissive to the government, and only meant to give utterance to a positive fact, useful to reveal, which was, that the local government, imitating the conduct of the head of the empire, committed the most arbitrary acts, acts which constituted an actual tyranny. To the eyes of the general public, matters wore a still worse aspect. They believed that very serious things had been said in the Legislative Corps, and that most important revelations had taken place. The enemies, who were anxious for the overthrow of the imperial government, were not slow to circulate a report that the emperor had had an open rupture with the public bodies, that they had wished to induce him to make peace, that he had refused, and that consequently the torrents of blood that were doomed to flow were attributable to him alone. All this was true of past times, but was false at the actual moment, and was the idea most injurious to the emperor's popularity that could take possession of the public mind.

This outburst, which, with a ruler of a different temperament to Napoleon, would have finished with an article in the *Moniteur*, had, thanks to his constitutional irritability, far more deplorable consequences. On the following day (the 1st of January) he was to receive the Legislative Corps with the other public bodies. He seemed anxious to meet them, as if he feared to lose the opportunity of giving vent to the vexation with which he was oppressed. After having received the customary compliments, he stepped forward abruptly, stood in the midst of the members of the Legislative Corps, and with a loud voice and sparkling eyes, spoke to them in language familiar even to vulgarity, but

expressive, proud, original, sometimes true, but more often imprudent; bearing, in short, all the characteristics of the anger of a great man. He told them he had called on them to do good, and they had done evil; to proclaim the unity of sentiment that subsisted between France and her monarch, and they had hastened to declare a disunion; that two battles lost in Champagne would not have been so injurious as what they had just done. Then apostrophising them vehemently, he said: "What do you wish for? You wish to seize on power; but what would you do with it? Which of you could wield it? Have you forgotten the Constituante, the Legislative Assembly, the Convention? Would you be more successful than they? Would you not all finish your career on the scaffold, like Guadet, Vergniaud, Danton? And besides, what does France need at this moment? It is not an assembly of deputies, it is not orators—it is a general. Is there one amongst you? And then, where are your credentials? France knows me—does she know you? She has twice chosen me for her chief by several million votes; and you—in the restricted space of the departments, she has elected you, by some hundred voices, to come and vote for the laws that I, and not you, make. I look for your titles, and I do not find them. *The throne in itself is only a framework of wood, covered over with velvet.* The actual throne is a man, and I am that man, with my indomitable will, my inflexible temper, and my widespread fame. It is I who can save France, and it is not you. You complain of abuses in the administration: in what you say there is some truth, and a great deal of falsehood. M. Raynouard has asserted that Marshal Massena seized the house of a private individual for the use of his staff. (This circumstance had occurred at Marseilles, where Marshal Massena had been envoy-extraordinary.) M. Raynouard has lied. The marshal took possession for a short time of a vacant house, and afterwards indemnified the owner for the use. It is not so that a marshal bowed down with years and covered with glory ought to be spoken of. If you had complaints to make you ought to have waited another opportunity, which I would myself have procured you, and then with some of my privy councillors, perhaps with myself personally, you could have discussed your grievances; and I would have applied remedies where there was any reasonable grounds for complaint. But the explanation ought to have taken place in private, *for it is in the retirement of home and not in presence of the public that we wash our dirty linen.* But instead of that, you have bespattered me with mire. I am, I would have you to know, a man whom you may kill, but whom you shall not insult with impunity. M. Lainé is a wicked man, in correspondence with the Bourbons, through the agency of the advocate

Desèze. I shall keep my eye on him, and on those whom I believe capable of criminal conspiracies. As to the rest, I distrust you all together. The eleven-twelfths of you are well meaning, but you allow yourselves to be led by designing men. Return into your departments; tell France that, no matter what might be said to the contrary, that the war is made against her not less than against me, and that she is now called on to defend, not my person, but her own national existence. I shall place myself at the head of the army, I shall repulse the enemy, I shall conclude peace, no matter what sacrifice it may cost what you call my ambition. I shall again summon you around me, I shall order your report to be printed, and you will be astonished yourselves that you had ever addressed me in such language and under such circumstances."

This ill-timed speech, which, if it contained some truth, contained still more falsehood (for if it was true that Napoleon alone could save France, it was equally true that he was the cause of her calamities, and if one alleged grievance was incorrect or exaggerated, a multitude of others could be proved that were unjust and insupportable), confounded all who heard it, and soon obtained a deplorable publicity. In fact, every one related it after his own fashion, and the consequence was that Napoleon appeared to be opposed by the heretofore submissive representatives of France, that is, to say, by France herself. The report of the Legislative Corps published *in extenso* could never have produced so unfortunate a result. It would have been seen in that, that there had been abuses in the home administration, and that the Legislative Corps wished to suppress them; it would have been also perceptible that Napoleon's despotism began to be oppressive to the mass of the citizens; but it would have been also seen that the Legislative Corps wished for peace, wished it on the bases of our natural frontiers; that the Legislative Corps advised the government not to yield these boundaries, and invited France to rise en masse. Such a declaration might well have induced the government to endure a few censures, very light indeed compared to what they might have been.

Still it was necessary to appeal to France, to endeavour to stir up her zeal; and Napoleon, for want of the public bodies, who were little inclined to fall in with his views, conceived the idea of selecting commissioners extraordinary amongst the senators. He intended to choose the most distinguished personages, either military or civil, and send them into their respective provinces, where they were supposed to have most influence, in order that they might facilitate the levy of the conscription, the payment of the taxes, the bringing in of the contributions in kind, the instruction and organisation of the

military bodies, the departure of the national guards; in fact, their mission was to accelerate the activity of the government in every department. In order to carry out these views, they would need be endowed with extraordinary and unlimited powers.

Before their departure Napoleon wished to see and speak with them. He was touched, it is true, and his emotion communicated to his language an o'er-mastering eloquence.

"I do not fear to acknowledge," he said, "that I have made war too long; I had conceived vast projects, I wished to secure to France the empire of the world. I was mistaken; these projects were not proportioned to the numerical force of our population. I should have been obliged to put them all under arms, and I now perceive that the advancement of society and the moral and social well-being of a State is not compatible with the converting an entire people into a nation of soldiers. I ought to expiate the fault I have committed in reckoning too much on my good fortune, and I will expiate it. I will make peace. I will make it on such terms as circumstances command, and this peace shall be mortifying to myself alone. It is I who have deceived myself; it is I who ought to suffer, it is not France. She has not committed any error, she has poured forth her blood for me, she has not refused me any sacrifice. Let her then enjoy the glory of my enterprises, let her enjoy it unreservedly, I yield it to her.

"As to me, I only reserve to myself the honour of displaying a courage difficult to attain, that of renouncing the highest ambition man ever entertained, and of sacrificing for the happiness of my people projects of greatness that could only be accomplished by efforts that I no longer wish to demand. Go, then, gentlemen, announce to your departments that I am about to conclude a peace, that I shall no longer require the blood of Frenchmen for my enterprises, for myself, as some people have been pleased to say, but for France, and to maintain the integrity of her frontiers. Tell them I only ask the means of expelling a foreign foe from our native land. Tell them that Alsace, Franche-Comté, Navarre, Bearn, are invaded. Tell them that I call on Frenchmen to come to the aid of Frenchmen; that I am willing to negotiate, but will only do so on the frontiers, not in the heart of our provinces, laid waste by a hoard of barbarians. I shall accompany my army both as a general and a soldier. Go, gentlemen, and repeat to all France the sentiments by which I am animated."

In listening to these generous excuses of genius, acknowledging its errors, a kind of enthusiasm seized these venerable personages who were about setting out for the provinces, to endeavour to awaken the zeal of a dejected people. They

crowded round Napoleon, pressed his hands in theirs, giving expression to the profound emotion with which they were seized. The greater part took leave to set off immediately for their destination. Alas! why did he not address these noble expressions to the Legislative Corps? He would have then seen that truth is the most powerful means of acting on the minds of men, and perhaps far from being obliged to dissolve that assembly, he would have seen the members rise to a man to applaud his sentiments, and call on every Frenchman to follow him to the field of battle.

The aspect of affairs became every moment more threatening, and it became of urgent importance to send as quickly as possible the remaining national forces to meet the enemy. The allied armies were crossing our frontiers on every side. General Bûna, who had set out first, after having skirted the opposite side of the Jura, had borne down on Geneva, where there were only a few conscripts to resist the Austrians and restrain a disaffected population. General Jordy, who commanded at Geneva, having died suddenly, the preparations for defence became disorganised, and the Austrians entered the city without striking a blow. The Generals Colleredo and Maurice Liechtenstein, with the light troops and Austrian reserves, after having passed by Berne, had taken their way towards Pontarlier, with the intention of marching through Dole on Auxonne. The corps d'Aloys de Liechtenstein, passing in like manner through Pontarlier, was to come down on Besançon to mask that place, whilst General Giulay, traversing Porentruy, was to advance through Montbéliard on Vesoul. Marshal Wrède, with the Bavarians and the Wurtembergers, had thrown bombs into Huningue, attacked Bâle, and sent out cavalry to reconnoitre Colmar. The Prince of Wittgenstein blockaded Strasburg and Kehl; the Russian and Prussian guards had remained at Bâle with the allied sovereigns. Such was the distribution of the army of Prince Schwarzenberg after the passage of the Rhine. His project, after he should have crossed the Jura and turned our defences, was to advance with 160,000 men of the old Bohemian army through Franche-Comté, and take up his position on the high grounds of Burgundy and Champagne, whence the Seine, the Aube, and the Marne flow towards Paris, whilst the old army of Silesia, commanded by Blücher, and 60,000 strong, crossing the Rhine at the same time at Mayence, should advance amongst our fortresses without attacking them, leaving the task of blockading them to the troops in the rear. The two invading armies were to unite at the Upper Marne, between Chaumont and Langres, in order to advance en masse towards the angle formed by the Marne and the Seine. Blücher, in fact, had on the 1st

of January 1814 crossed the Rhine at three points—Manheim, Mayence, and Coblenz—without meeting any greater resistance than the great army of Prince Schwarzenberg had encountered along the Jura range. Thus the prestige of the inviolability of our frontiers was doomed to be destroyed in many places at the same time.

In fact, it would have been difficult, in the actual state of our forces, to oppose any resistance to this mass of invaders. Along the Jura frontier, where the attack was unexpected, there were no troops stationed; but General Mortier, who had at first been ordered to Belgium with the old guard, returned by forced marches from the north to the east, through Rheims, Chalons, Chaumont, and Langres. On the Alsatian frontier, Marshal Victor, with the 2nd infantry and the 5th cavalry corps, was at Strasburg, where he had scarcely time to give his troops a little rest, and incorporate a few conscripts. This corps, which in drawing upon all the dépôts in Alsace ought to have furnished thirty-six battalions and three divisions, did not reckon, after having hastily embodied all the disposable conscripts, more than from eight to nine thousand infantry, ill armed and badly clothed. The displacement of our dépôts which had been put in the rear had added very considerably to the difficulty of recruiting. However, Marshal Victor had in the 5th cavalry corps nearly four thousand old dragoons of Spain, incomparable soldiers, and moreover, deeply irritated against the enemy. At the appearance of the masses that debouched by Bâle, Belfort, and Besançon, the marshal had avoided encountering them on the way from Colmar to Bâle; he had, on the contrary, fallen back on Saverne, and taken up a position on the Vosges, after having left in Strasburg about eight thousand conscripts and national guards, under General Broussier, with sufficient supplies. This brave marshal was visibly disconcerted. However, his noble cavalry had fallen on the Russian and Bavarian squadrons that had advanced against them, had defeated and put them to the sword.

On the Mayence side, the Duke of Ragusa, on receiving intelligence of the passage of the Rhine, effected on the 1st of January, retreated with the 6th infantry and the 1st cavalry corps, leaving in Mayence the 4th corps, commanded by General Morand, and reduced by typhus fever from 24,000 to 11,000 men. He had been joined on the way by the Durutte division, that had been sent on to Coblenz, and which was cut off from Mayence, where it could not gain admission. The duke's first impulse was to hasten to Alsace to the assistance of Marshal Victor; but seeing Alsace invaded by the enemy, and almost abandoned by our troops, who had already gained the summit of the Vosges, he had taken up a position on the



other side of these mountains, that is to say, on the Sarre and the Moselle, in order to effect a junction with Marshal Victor in the direction of Metz, Nancy, or Luneville. He, too, had encountered great difficulties in recruiting his corps, owing to want of time and the displacement of the dépôts. He had about 10,000 foot soldiers and 3000 cavalry composing the 1st cavalry corps, and these he was obliged to weaken by leaving some detachments at Metz and Thionville.

Marshal Ney had two divisions of the young guard that he concentrated at Epinal. We were then about to have on the opposite side of the Vosges the Marshals Victor, Marmont, and Ney, between Metz, Nancy, and Epinal, and on the high ground that separates Franche-Comté from Burgundy, that is to say, at Langres, we had Marshal Mortier with the old guard, both falling back, but at the same time confronting, on one side, Blücher, who was advancing from Mayence to Metz, amidst our fortresses, and on the other side, Schwarzenberg, who had flanked them by violating the Swiss neutrality, and who was advancing from Bâle and Besançon on Langres.

Thus Lorraine, Alsace, Franche-Comté, were invaded. The enemy promised everywhere to the people the greatest forbearance, and in the commencement kept their word, through fear of provoking a general rising. Terror had seized our rural populations. The peasants of Lorraine, of Alsace, of Franche-Comté, bellicose by temperament and through the influence of tradition, would have willingly risen against the enemy if they had had arms to fight with or troops to sustain them in the conflict. But they, as well as all the inhabitants of France, wanted money, and the quick retreat of the marshals discouraged them. Overwhelmed by despair, they submitted to the enemy.

The retreat of the armies was accompanied by the less regretted retreat of the principal functionaries. The imperial government, after mature deliberation, had ordered the prefects, sub-prefects, &c., &c., to retire with the troops, in order to create an additional embarrassment for the enemy—that of being obliged to appoint an administration in the invaded provinces. It was the recollection of the annoyances we had experienced in conquered countries, especially where the governing authorities had withdrawn, that caused the adoption of this measure by the government, a measure strongly opposed by the Duke de Rovigo. It would, perhaps, have been wise to have acted thus in a country where there existed no party hostile to the government, and ready to rise at the approach of the allies. Unfortunately, in France, twenty-five years of revolution had left numerous parties that Napoleon, if conquered, could no longer restrain, and amongst these there was

one, that of the ancient régime, the similarity of whose opinions with those of the allies induced them to hope everything from the invaders. The absence of the governing authorities in France was therefore attended with very disagreeable results. In fact, the disaffected, no longer under the surveillance of the prefects, sub-prefects, and police, gave vent to their hostile feelings at the approach of the enemy, and rose when they had advanced some way to aid them in forming administrations favourable to their views; they were even preparing to proclaim the Bourbons. These sentiments did not prevail in the rural districts, where the people were deeply irritated by the long train of ills entailed by the invasion. But in the cities, where the ferment of opinion is generally strongest, the hatred of the imperial government was general, and as the ills entailed by the invasion were little felt by the citizens, the most dangerous manifestations burst forth, not alone on the part of the royalists, but from all those who were weary of despotism and of war. Thus France was invaded at the very moment when, suffering, exhausted, and torn by faction, she was no longer able to renew the noble example of patriotism she had exhibited in 1792; and it was not the least of the errors committed by the imperial government, that France was obliged to show herself in this state to the European coalition.

On the approach of the soldiers of Prince Schwarzenberg towards Langres, some of the chief inhabitants of the city, aided by a populace tired of conscription and the *droits réunis*, threatened to rise against the troops of Marshal Mortier. At Nancy the municipal authorities and some influential persons of the country had received Marshal Blücher with great honours, and even offered him a banquet. The Prussian general had spoken to them of the good intentions of the allies, of their desire to deliver France from her tyrant, and he was eagerly listened to by people whose hearts were torn by the miseries attendant on a protracted war.

Our armies retreated, leaving behind them defenceless peasants, whose last supplies they were often obliged to seize, and cities exasperated against the imperial government, willingly giving ear to the promises of the allies, who presented themselves not as conquerors but as liberators. One additional circumstance completed the misery of this picture. The few survivors of our glorious armies, disheartened by suffering, humiliated by continued retreats, gave utterance to their discontent, and often re-echoed the remarks of the urban populations. The old soldiers did not desert their standards; but the conscripts, especially those who belonged to the departments through which the armies were passing, made no scruple of quitting the ranks,

and the Marshals Victor and Marmont had already in this way lost some thousands.

An ocular witness of this distressing position of affairs, a faithful aide-de-camp of the emperor, General Dejean, had made him an exact portraiture of these things, and assured him that all was lost if he did not hasten by his presence to apply a remedy. In the Low Countries, affairs did not wear a better aspect. Marshal Macdonald, seeing himself outflanked on the right by Blücher's column, which had crossed the Rhine between Mayence and Coblenz, had summoned to his aid the 11th and 5th infantry and the 3rd cavalry corps, besides what remained of the troops returned from Holland, and had retired to Mezières with about 12,000 men, leaving only very small garrisons at Wesel and at Maestricht. General Decaen, being sent to Antwerp, had assembled there a garrison of from 7000 to 8000 men, composed of sailors and conscripts, and had, moreover, thrown 3000 men into Flushing and 2000 into Bergen-op-Zoom, but had abandoned Breda, which could not be defended, and Willemstadt, which could have been defended, and which was an important point on the Wahal. The desertion of this latter place was much to be regretted, for after having lost Holland, it would have been a great advantage to preserve, between Holland and Belgium, the water-line which offered the most defensible frontier. But General Decaen, being able to perform only a part of his task, had preferred Antwerp and Flushing to all the other places. He had taken up a position, with the guards, in advance of Antwerp, resolved to defend energetically this great arsenal, which had so long excited the violent hatred of England, and kept alive an incessant solicitude on the part of Napoleon.

The public danger could not be more alarming, particularly if we consider that since the letter of the 10th of December, in which M. de Metternich, acknowledging the receipt of the note of the 2nd of December, had declared that he was about to submit it to the allied courts, the French cabinet had received no further communication. This silence, joined to the offensive movement of the armies, seemed to indicate that the allies no longer thought of negotiating, and that henceforth their sole thought would be to accomplish our destruction.

Whatever might be the activity of Napoleon, he could not be ready to face the enemy before a considerable portion of France should be invaded, and meanwhile he was obliged to submit to the annoyance of seeing the best provinces—the best both materially and morally—occupied by the enemy. To these difficulties was added the danger of permitting seditious manifestations in the great cities, and of allowing the name of Bourbon to be there publicly proclaimed. In such a state of

things it would have been happiness to obtain an armistice even on severe conditions, for the progress of the invasion would have been by this means suspended, and if the emperor did not succeed in coming to terms with the allied powers, he would at least gain the two months still indispensable to the completion of our means of defence. Napoleon had too much sagacity to believe that his enemies, whose advance a severe winter had not interrupted, would suspend their march to listen to mere parleying. He was even convinced that they had abandoned the idea of negotiating, and no longer wished to conclude a peace except within the walls of Paris. Nevertheless, a trial would cost nothing, and in case of failure, the worst that could happen would be to remain as he was. Besides, according to what M. de St. Aignan had seen, and according to reports received from the invaded provinces, there existed between the allies serious dissensions. Austria, so rumour said, was offended at the pretensions of Russia, and inclined to peace. In fact, the Emperor Francis, independent of the love he bore his daughter, was not inclined to augment the importance of Russia, or to satisfy the maritime jealousies of England; and if he got what he desired in Italy, it was possible that he might pause in his course. Then, if Austria abandoned hostilities, all the allies would be obliged to do the same. To these suppositions, which were not devoid of probability, there was but one to oppose, but that one was very plausible: it was, that through fear of a rupture, all the allies, including the Austrians, would refuse every personal advantage, however great. If amongst these opposite chances the fortunate one turned up, France was saved, and therefore Napoleon did not hesitate to make a last attempt to negotiate, however small might be the hope of success.

He at first thought of sending to the camp of the allies M. de Champagny (the Duke de Cadore), who had been minister of foreign affairs, prior to which he had been ambassador at Vienna, where he had won the esteem of the Emperor Francis. However, the very natural reflection afterwards suggested itself that to negotiate with the allied monarchs too important and influential a personage could not be chosen, and acting on this consideration, Napoleon determined to send M. de Caulaincourt himself. He confided to him the double mission of treating for peace, and if it could be done without testifying too much alarm, to try to obtain an armistice. As to peace, the conditions were still the same that we have already mentioned, that is to say, the line of the Rhine, but the great line, that which, following the course of the Wahal, cuts off North Brabant from Holland. The idea of excluding the house of Orange was abandoned, as well as the hope of creating in Westphalia a

state for King Jerome. In Italy, France, yielding part of the territory to Austria, without requiring anything for herself, persisted, however, in demanding an appanage for the Princess Eliza, and if possible, for the brothers of Napoleon, Jerome and Joseph. The difference between these terms and the project of peace drawn up by Napoleon on the morrow of the Frankfort propositions was not great. With regard to the armistice, M. de Caulaincourt, in order to win over Austria, was to offer her underhand the fortresses of Venice and Palma-Nova, which implied the concession of the line of the Adige. Those of Hamburg and Magdeburg were also to be immediately delivered up to Prussia, still with the object of obtaining a suspension of arms. The natural consequence of the evacuation of these four fortresses in Italy and in Germany would have been the speedy return of the garrisons, which would have given an addition of 10,000 men at least to the army of Italy, and 40,000 to the army of the Rhine.

The only objection that could be made to the sending M. de Caulaincourt was the difficulty of presenting himself to the ministers of the coalition, when no place had been appointed for negotiation, and the mention of Manheim in M. de Bassano's letter of the 16th of November had led to no result. However, the emperor was in a position where the whispers of self-love must be hushed, and as the danger was every moment increasing, it was ultimately agreed that M. de Caulaincourt should repair without delay to the French outposts, that he should then write to M. de Metternich, saying that in consequence of the assurances brought in his name by M. de St. Aignan, and his formal invitation to renew negotiations, the emperor did not wish that any delay on the part of France should prolong for one hour the ills entailed by war; that M. de Caulaincourt had therefore repaired to the outposts, ready to set out for Manheim, or any other city the allied monarchs might please to appoint.

If when M. de Caulaincourt arrived at the outposts he should be left there in a humiliating position, which was possible, there would be at least some compensation for this humiliation, for it would prove that Napoleon desired peace, that no difficulty was now offered by his obstinacy, and the knowledge of the ill treatment received by his envoy might win him back the good opinion of the French.

Matters having been thus arranged, M. de Caulaincourt set out on the 5th of January for the French outposts, leaving M. de la Besnardière, the most skilful clerk in the department, to replace him in the administration of foreign affairs. Napoleon was preparing to set out soon himself to support with his sword the negotiations that M. de Caulaincourt was exercising his influence to resume.

M. de Caulaincourt repaired to Luneville, a place rendered famous by a treaty concluded in happier times, and on arriving at the foot of the Vosges, he met our armies retreating precipitately, and preceded in their retreat by the flight of all the public functionaries. He heard the remarks of the troops and the people, he saw the wretchedness of the officers, the desertion of the young soldiers, and the newly awakened audacity of the royalist party, who, without being popular, obtained a hearing when they spoke of peace, legal rights, even of liberty. A worthy citizen and a brave soldier, M. de Caulaincourt was overwhelmed with grief when he saw our provinces invaded, and our armies put, as it were, to rout. To his grief as a citizen was added his sorrow as a father, for his private fortune, that is to say, the property of his children, was involved in the destiny of Napoleon, and he was deeply afflicted at the danger that threatened the imperial throne. He hastened to describe to Napoleon things as they were, and point out the dejection of certain military chiefs who were not faithless, but discouraged, and he begged him, after reflecting deliberately on his position, to send him more acceptable conditions of peace. At the same time he wrote to M. de Metternich, saying that, astonished at his silence, which seemed inexplicable when he referred to the communications of M. de St. Aignan, he had come expressly to obtain a reply, which he awaited at the outposts, ready to repair to any place that the allies might appoint for entering into negotiations.

This demand for an explanation having reached M. de Metternich through M. de Wrède, the former was not a little embarrassed, for after the pacific demonstrations the allies had made, to refuse to treat would have been a gross, even a dangerous inconsistency, both parties being equally anxious to gain the good opinion of the public, whether in allied Europe or in France. M. de Metternich and the Emperor Francis were still disposed to negotiate with increased ambition, it is true, touching Italy; but the imagination of the other allies was too strongly inflamed, since that, in compliance with the wishes of England, and in obedience to the strong impulse of German passions, hostilities had been again renewed. The unexpected facility with which they had penetrated into Switzerland and France had persuaded them that they had nothing more to do but to march forward in order to put an end to the war, in a manner conformable to their most extravagant desires; and to hear them speak, one would have said they had no other enemy to fear than their own dissensions. These, it is true, were very great. Alexander, still discontented at the entrance into Switzerland, did not wish that the popular party should be oppressed for the advantage of the aristocratic, whilst

Austria acted in a manner directly opposite. Austria did not wish the Danes to be sacrificed to the Prince of Sweden, or the King of Saxony to Prussia, and Alexander wished directly the contrary. The Tyrolese begged to be placed immediately under the government of Austria, and Bavaria demanded that she should be first indemnified for the loss. England thought only of establishing the dynasty of the house of Orange, in order to shut out France from the Schelde; and Austria, before consenting to this measure, wished that England should promise to support her against Russia. In such a chaos of contending interests it would be difficult to come to a resolution on any subject, more particularly on that of suspending hostilities, a subject more likely than any other to excite differences of opinion and awaken angry feeling.

Intelligence now arrived of good augury for the allies. This was the approaching arrival of Lord Castlereagh himself, who did not fear to quit the foreign office in order to represent England amongst the allied sovereigns. Up to this time England had had as agents, Lord Cathcart, a brave soldier, but little skilled in diplomacy, and Lord Aberdeen, a man of enlightened mind, but accused of being too pacifically inclined. It was not sufficient in this assemblage of sovereigns, where each power was represented by emperors, by kings, or by prime ministers, to have merely ambassadors, whatever might be their merit. The British cabinet decided, then, to send the most eminent of its members, Lord Castlereagh, to the ambulatory congress of the coalition, to moderate the passions that prevailed there, to maintain union, and to obtain the fulfilment of England's desires, and these desires being satisfied, to take part on every other question with the moderate against the extreme party. In short, Lord Castlereagh's mission, which seems natural enough, was to preach moderation to the allies, but to bate nothing of England's pretensions. He was, besides, to enter into explanations touching the war budget of Count Pozzo, and to make free use of English money for the accomplishment of his views, throwing from time to time, not his sword, but his gold, into the balance. No man was better suited than Lord Castlereagh to fulfil such a mission. His name was Robert Stewart; his brother, Charles Stewart, afterwards Lord Londonderry, accredited to the court of Bernadotte, was one of England's most active and most zealous agents. Lord Castlereagh, descended from an Irish family, inherited an ardent and energetic temperament, but tempered in him by lofty reason. His intellect strong and far-seeing, his temper cautious and firm, he was capable of acting at the same time with vigour and with prudence. Exhibiting in his manners the proud simplicity of an Englishman, he was called

to exercise, and he did exercise, a great influence on the allies. He was on almost every question furnished with absolute powers. With his temperament, with his instructions, it might be almost said that it was England herself that was transplanted from her sea-girt home, and appeared in the camp of the allies. Having left London about the end of December, and having abode some time in Holland, to give advice to the Prince of Orange, he was not expected at Fribourg until the latter end of January. None of the coalition thought of taking a decided resolution before his arrival, or of giving a reply to any diplomatic communications. A strong rivalry already existed between the allies, to know who should see, who should converse with him first, in order to gain him as a partisan. Alexander had let Lord Castlereagh know, through Lord Cathcart, that he hoped to be the first to have an interview with him.

The expected arrival of Lord Castlereagh furnished M. de Metternich with a means of replying to the French envoy. He let M. de Caulaincourt know that England having come to the determination of sending her minister of foreign affairs to the camp of the allies, they were obliged to wait his arrival before fixing the place, the object, and the direction of fresh negotiations. Besides this official reply, M. de Metternich wrote a private letter to M. de Caulaincourt, polite and flattering as regarded himself personally, but very obscure as regarded matters of business. The purport was that the allies still wished for peace, that they hoped it, that there was no cause to despair of it, but that they must still wait patiently. As to the rest, there was not a word in allusion to the possibility of a suspension of hostilities. This letter was accompanied by one from the Emperor Francis to Marie Louise. This prince had believed his daughter to be ill: he inquired after her, and received a letter, to which he replied. He expressed much affection for Marie Louise, a great desire for peace, but not so ardent a hope of attaining it; he also expressed a resolution of labouring sincerely for that end; and lastly, he gave utterance to the vexation of encountering serious difficulties in the general confusion of ideas, the result of the confusion of things that had prevailed during the past twenty years.\*

\* I give here this instructive and interesting letter, which shows plainly the personal feelings of the Emperor of Austria towards his daughter, his son-in-law, and France.

“26th December 1813.

“DEAR LOUISE,—I received yesterday your letter of the 12th of December, and it gave me much pleasure to learn that you are in good health. I thank you for the kind wishes you offer me for the new year; they are welcome, for I know your sincerity. I offer you mine with all my heart.

“As to peace, be persuaded that I do not desire it less than you, than all France, and as I hope, your husband. It is only in peace that happiness and



M. de Caulaincourt transmitted these several replies to Napoleon, and not wishing to draw upon himself public attention, which would add to the humiliation of his position, he waited at the outposts until the arrival of Lord Castlereagh, which was daily expected, should lead to more serious communications.

Napoleon was too well aware of the real state of things to be surprised at the reception M. de Caulaincourt got. Each day was marked by a fresh retrograde movement of his armies, and he could no longer defer placing himself at their head. Marshal Victor, more and more frightened at the number of the enemy, had finished by recrossing the Vosges, after having abandoned all the defiles. The heroic cavalry of Spain, not sharing the marshal's panic, always rushed upon the enemy's squadrons, and cut them down when they came in contact. Marshal Victor had fallen back successively on Epinal and Chaumont, and had taken up his position on the Upper Marne, near St. Dizier, having lost through fatigue and desertion between 2000 and 3000 men. In this state he had remaining at the utmost 7000 foot soldiers and 3500 horse. Marshal Marmont, after having tried to oppose Blucher on the Sarre, had fallen back on Metz, had paused there a short time, to leave the Durutte division, which had been cut off from Mayence, and which he had picked up on the way, in garrison. He then retired to Vitry. He had remaining about 6000 foot soldiers and 2500 horse. These two marshals had been joined on the Upper Marne by Marshal Ney with the two divisions of the young guard, reorganised between Metz and Luxemburg, whilst Marshal Mortier, after having advanced to Langres with the old guard, fell back towards Bar-sur-Aube, followed closely by General Giulay and the Prince of Wurtemberg.

Napoleon had flattered himself that the corps of Marmont, Victor, Macdonald, whilst retreating, might recruit and raise their number to 15,000 each. They certainly had received some reinforcements, but desertion, and the necessity of providing for the defence of the fortresses, had reduced them to

safety can be found. My views are moderate. I wish everything that can secure the duration of peace; but in this world it is not sufficient merely to wish. I have important duties to fulfil towards my allies, and unfortunately the question of the future peace, which I still hope is near, is very complicated. Your country has overturned long-established ideas. When we come to debate these questions, we have to contend with well-founded complaints or with prejudices. But peace is not on that account less ardently desired by me, and I hope we shall soon be able to reconcile our peoples. In England there is no manifestation of ill-will, but great preparations are being made. This necessarily occasions delays until things are put *en train*; then all will go on prosperously, please God.

"I am delighted with the account you give of your son. Your brothers and sisters are well, according to the last accounts I received; so is my wife. I, too, am in good health. Believe me ever your affectionate father,

"FRANCIS."

the small number we have cited. The guard, that Napoleon had hoped to raise to 80,000 infantry, did not amount to more than 30,000, of whom from 7000 to 8000 were in Belgium under Generals Roguet and Barrois, 6000 under Marshal Ney near St. Dizier, 12,000 under Marshal Mortier at Bar-sur-Aube. It is true that 10,000 had just been drilled at Paris. The horse guards, out of 10,000 fit for service, had 6000 mounted, of whom half were with Mortier, and half with Lefebvre-Desnoettes. The latter had returned in all haste from the Schelde to the Marne. Of the divisions of reserve that were formed at Paris by drafting conscripts into the dépôts, one, scarcely amounting to 6000 men, had set out before being completed, under the command of General Gerard, to reinforce Marshal Mortier on the Aube; the other had repaired to Troyes, under General Hamelinaye, and reckoned scarcely 4000 conscripts, wholly undrilled. The horse reserve, formed at Versailles by the combination of all the cavalry dépôts, had already furnished 3000 horse-soldiers, whom General Pajol, covered with still-gaping wounds, had led to Auxerre. Such were the resources that the rapid succession of events had permitted Napoleon to assemble in January. We must add to these the national guards that came from Picardy to Soissons, from Normandy to Meaux, from Bretagne, and from Orleanais to Montereau, and from Burgundy to Troyes.

Napoleon did not despair with these feeble means of making head against the storm. He ordered that the two divisions of the young guard should be completed as quickly as possible, and that the organisation of the divisions of reserve should be continued by means of the dépôts and conscripts. He ordered that the men should not remain a single day in Paris; as soon as they were provided with a vest, a schako, shoes, and a musket, they were to set out for the army, no matter how little drilling they might have gone through. He infused new vigour into the clothing magazines established at Paris; but he encountered more difficulty in providing fire-arms than any other necessary. There were at Vincennes only 9000 new muskets and 30,000 old; workmen were every day employed at the latter, to render them fit for service. There was scarcely enough to arm the men that were drafted into the dépôts as they arrived. The artillery, that had been crowded into Vincennes, drawn by horses, picked up anywhere and everywhere, was to be sent off immediately to Châlons, where our forces were about to assemble. The private treasure of Napoleon supplied the funds, which the public treasury was inadequate to. M. Mollien, an excellent administrator of the public money in times of peace, but taken by surprise in these extraordinary circumstances, had not been able, notwithstanding the addi-

tional centimes, to supply the expenses of the army. Napoleon, out of the 63,000,000 f. that remained of his personal savings, had given 17,000,000 to General Druot for the guards; about ten to the treasurer for the different other services; eight for fresh horses, clothing, and the manufacture of fire-arms; and one to his brothers, now crownless and penniless kings. He intended to bring 4,000,000 with him, and 23,000 or 24,000 were to be left at the Tuileries to provide for urgent or unforeseen wants.

If the troops of Spain could have been brought up, they would have been at this moment a most valuable aid. But no intelligence had yet been received of the reception given to the Duke de San Carlos, nor anything further relative to the treaty of Valençay. Ferdinand VII., waiting with continually increasing impatience the opening of his prison doors, was in as great ignorance as the French cabinet.\* This silence was a bad omen, and in any case the emperor could not withdraw the troops from the frontier before knowing whether the French or English would cross the Pyrenees. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Napoleon ordered Suchet to send 12,000 men to Lyon, and General Soult to send 15,000 men to Paris, as quickly as possible. To these he joined two of the four divisions of reserve formed at Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, and Nimes. The four did not amount to more than 18,000 conscripts, instead of the 60,000 he had flattered himself with being able to raise; but they were composed of skeleton regiments borrowed from the army of Spain, and all good soldiers. Napoleon sent the Bordeaux division to Paris: it amounted to about 4000 men. That of Nimes, which amounted to about 3000 men, was sent to Lyon. Such was his distress, that even these resources were become of actual importance. The division sent to Lyon was to serve as an addition to Angereau's army; the division sent on to Paris was to augment this assemblage of troops of all kinds—the young guard, battalions drawn from the dépôts, national guards, old bands of Spain; and from these he hoped to draw, as soon as they were ready, sufficient men to sustain the terrible struggle that was about to take place between the Seine and the Marne. Lastly, he made preparations for the defence of the capital.

More than once, even in the heyday of his prosperity, had Napoleon, by a kind of prescience which revealed to him the consequence of his errors without teaching him to avoid them—more than once, we say, even then, had he, in fancy, seen the

\* The work of M. Fain, which on this point contains more than one error, although founded principally on the documents of the Duke of Bassano, describes Ferdinand VII. as arriving at Madrid on the 6th of January. This prince did not leave Valençay until the 19th of March.

armies of Europe at the foot of Montmartre, and after each dark-boding vision had he resolved to fortify Paris. But again, carried away by the torrent of his thoughts and his passions, he had lavished millions on Alessandria, Mantua, Venice, Palma-Nova, Flushing, Texel, Hamburg, and Dantzic, and had neglected the capital of France. If he had commenced to fortify Paris in the days of his prosperity, the Parisians might have smiled, and there would have been no harm done. In January 1814 such a proceeding would have made them tremble, and would have augmented the disaffection of some, and the consternation of others. However, in Napoleon's opinion, were Paris beyond the possibility of danger, the success of the approaching campaign would be secure; for, if in manœuvring between the Aisne, the Marne, the Aube, and the Seine, which flow concentrically towards Paris, he had been certain of a common focus where they all unite, he would have acquired a liberty of action which would have given him, with his genius, with his perfect knowledge of the locality, and holding possession of all the passages, an immense advantage over enemies embarrassed in their progress, always ready to repent of having advanced too far, and whom he might probably have surprised in some false position, where he would have overpowered them. On this account he was continually thinking of fortifying Paris, but he feared the moral effect of such a precaution. He had ordered a committee of engineer officers, appointed especially for the inspection of fortresses, to draw up a plan for the defence of Paris, with instructions to keep the matter a profound secret. As the plans they proposed required immediate and conspicuous labours, he had abandoned them, and had contented himself with selecting, quietly and unostentatiously, sites where redoubts could be erected. He prepared great palisades, which were to serve either to strengthen the enclosure, or as *tambours* before the gates. In short, he wished to collect within the walls of Paris a supply of artillery and munitions of war, deferring until the last moment to organise, with the aid of the inhabitants and the dépôts, an obstinate defence for the great city that contained his last resources and his family, which was the seat of his government, and the key to the entire theatre of war.

He commanded some other measures relative to Belgium, to Italy, to Murat, and to the Pope. Discontented with General Decaen, on account of the evacuation of Willemstadt, he replaced him by General Maison, who had distinguished himself so much in the late campaigns. The instructions he gave the latter were to establish himself in an entrenched camp in front of Antwerp, with three brigades of the young guard, and whatever battalions of the 1st corps should be formed. He

was to endeavour to keep the enemy on the Schelde by the threat of falling on their rear if they marched towards Brussels. The emperor ordered Macdonald to fall back on the Argonne, and from thence on the Marne, with the 5th and 11th corps and the 3rd cavalry. He ordered Prince Eugène to send him, if he could, without compromising the line of the Adige, a strong division, which, passing through Turin and Chambery, should strengthen Augereau. The emperor still persevered in the same silence with regard to Murat, who became every day more pressing, and threatened to join the allies if Italy on the right of the Po were not ceded to him. In short, not knowing what to do with the Pope at Fontainebleau, whence he might be carried off by the enemy, and not wishing to restore his liberty for fear of complicating the affairs of Italy, he made him set out for Savona, under the conduct of Colonel Lagorsse, who, in discharging the duty of a gaoler, had combined respect with vigilance. The Austrians not having been able hitherto either to force the Adige or to approach Geneva, Savona was still a safe place.\*

These arrangements having been made, Napoleon resolved to set out. The empress was to act as regent during his absence, as she had done during the preceding campaign, the High Chancellor Cambacérès acting as privy councillor. Joseph was to assist and even take the place of the empress if she left Paris, for though determined to defend Paris *à outrance*, Napoleon had not resolved to leave his wife and son exposed to bombs and balls, perhaps even to captivity, if the allies succeeded in forcing the hastily got up defences of the capital. In case the empress retreated to the interior of the empire, Joseph and the other brothers of Napoleon who might happen to be at Paris were expected to give an example of courage to the national guard, and die, if necessary, to defend a throne more important to them than those of Spain, of Holland, or of Westphalia, for it was not only the greatest but the only one that remained to the family.

Besides these precautions taken against the external foe, Napoleon had thought also of taking some against the internal enemy, that is to say, against the plotter whose object was to restore France either to the republicans or the Bourbons. The Chancellor Cambacérès and the Duke de Rovigo had received

\* M. Fain and other writers have asserted that Napoleon sent the Pope to Rome this very day. This is an error demonstrated by authentic documents. The departure from Fontainebleau was certainly the commencement of the journey that brought the Pope to Rome; but it was not commanded with the intention of actually sending him there. It was at a later period that Napoleon gave orders that he should return to Rome, and this from motives that we shall explain in their proper place. The State papers contain instructions from Napoleon, and letters from Colonel Lagorsse, that leave no doubt on these points.

orders to extend their surveillance even to the princes of the imperial family, and in particular to certain dignitaries, such as M. de Talleyrand for example, who constantly inspired Napoleon with the most extraordinary apprehensions. Though deprived of the most active of his associates, the Duke of Otranto, who was sent on a mission to Murat, M. de Talleyrand was still much to be feared. Napoleon saw distinctly in him the man around whom his enemies of all kinds would throng to erect a new government on the wreck of the overthrown empire. After having felt a decided liking for M. de Talleyrand, and having inspired him with similar sentiments, now feeling himself deprived of the surest means to please—prosperity—remembering, besides, how often on many occasions he had offended this great personage, he thought he had done enough to earn his hatred; he reckoned on it, he made sure of it. He feared him, especially since the name of the Bourbons had been revived, for though his past life and opinions ranked him as a supporter of the Revolution, still the ancient Bishop of Autun, now a prince and a married man, was of such high birth, and endowed with such nobility of mind, he possessed so many means of being useful, that his peace might be easily made with the Bourbons. Napoleon saw in him a formidable instrument of counter-revolution. With such presentiments, he ought either to have rendered him powerless to do harm, or attached him to the imperial interests; but notwithstanding his strength of mind and energy of character, Napoleon, as too often happens with persons slumbering on the brink of a precipice, pursued, with regard to M. de Talleyrand, an unsteady line of conduct. He left him full possession of his liberty; he was still a great dignitary and member of the council of regency; and instead of conciliating whilst leaving him so powerful, Napoleon, on the contrary, made him the most bitter reproaches on the eve of his departure, so strongly did the bare sight of M. de Talleyrand excite, torment, and irritate him. He told him that he knew him thoroughly, that he was not ignorant of what he was capable of doing, that he would keep a strict eye on him, and that at the first doubtful step he took he should make him feel the weight of his authority. Then, after the most violent invectives, he went no further than mere words, and contented himself with ordering the Duke de Rovigo to keep the strictest watch as well over M. de Talleyrand as over some other high functionaries then out of favour. The Duke de Rovigo was not a man to hesitate in the execution of his orders, whatever they might be, but what could he do against a skilful adversary who conducted himself too cautiously to give a hold to his enemies, and who, besides, was haloed with a mighty fame? It would be dangerous to strike him incautiously, and M. de

Talleyrand knew well how to profit of the moment when he might dare anything against an enemy almost entirely deprived of the means of defence.

Napoleon on the eve of his departure wished to see and harangue the officers of the national guard, to whom he was about to confide the interior and exterior safety of Paris. The national guard of the capital was composed, not of this popular class, courageous and strong, as capable of bravely defending what is confided to them as of, through their clumsiness, destroying it. The Parisian national guard was composed of men in easy circumstances, adverse to revolutions, who did not forget that Napoleon had saved France from anarchy, though they condemned him for having precipitated her into a dreadful war. These men detested the Republic, and had no sympathy for the Bourbons. Napoleon having resolved to fight at the head of his soldiers for the French territory, determined to confide to the national guard the care of defending his wife and son against any republican or royalist movement that might be attempted within the walls of the capital. He received the officers of this guard at the Tuileries, with his wife on one side of him and his son on the other. Then advancing into the midst of the guards, and pointing to this child, lately the heir of such high fortune, now perhaps doomed to exile, even to death, he told them he was going forth to defend them and their families, and drive back from their land the enemies that had dared to cross the frontiers, but in going forth he left, as a deposit in their hands, all that was dearest to him, next to France; he left his wife and his son, and set out with a tranquil mind, confiding such pledges to their honour. The sight of this great man, reduced, after having performed so many prodigies, to such extremities, holding his son in his arms, confiding him to their devotedness, awakened in the guard the most profound emotion, and they promised, in all sincerity, never to consent that any other than he should mount the throne of France. Alas! they believed what they said! Which of them, in fact, though there was a wide field then open to conjecture—which of them could foresee at that moment the far different scenes that should soon take place in these same Tuileries, and should confound, not alone the sagacity of those who then occupied them, but that of their successors and the successors of their successors!

Napoleon set out next day for Chalons, and in taking leave of his wife and son, without knowing that he embraced them for the last time, pressed them warmly in his arms. His wife wept, apprehensive of never beholding him again. She was indeed destined never to behold him again, but it was not the bullets of the enemy that deprived her of the sight of her

husband! She would have been much surprised had any one told her then that this husband, at that moment the object of all her anxiety, should die in a remote isle of the ocean, the prisoner of all Europe, and forgotten by her. As for him, he would not have been astonished had he heard the prediction, for he was prepared alike for utter abandonment, or extreme devotedness, from men whom he knew thoroughly, and towards whom, nevertheless, he acted as if he did not know them.



## BOOK LII.

### BRIENNE AND MONTMIRAIL.

HAVING left Paris on the morning of the 25th, Napoleon arrived the same evening at Chalons-sur-Marne. The road was already thronged with fugitives, soldiers, and peasants. The inhabitants of Chalons, to whom the presence of the emperor gave confidence, cried out repeatedly, *Vive l'Empereur!* but they always added, *à bas les droits réunis*, so general was the disaffection against the established régime become. It was, to say the truth, the cry of local egotism against the most necessary taxes, which the flatterers of the people, to whatever class they belong, have always promised to abolish, without having ever been able to find a substitute, but at this moment the cry signified, *Down with the imperial government.* But the opinion of the Chalonais touching the imperial régime, was tinctured by annoyances they experienced as vine-dressers of Champagne. Napoleon took no notice of this, and appeared gentle, calm, friendly, and won every heart by the tranquillity of his demeanour.

Berthier had reached Chalons before the emperor. The old Duke de Valmy, still charged with the administration of the depôts, had repaired there from another quarter. Marmont and Ney arrived at Chalons. They were greatly troubled in mind, though generally little disturbed by the appearance of danger; but now, having only the débris of their armies, they earnestly demanded reinforcements, and flattered themselves in seeing Napoleon arrive that reinforcements would quickly follow. Unfortunately he only brought himself; it was a great deal certainly, as events soon proved, but not sufficient to resist the mass of enemies now pouring down on France. His lieutenants said that, of course, troops were coming up after the emperor. "No," he replied coolly, and after having confounded them by this reply, he revived them soon by the boldness and profundity of the views that he exposed to them. It seemed as if, escaped from the gnawing cares that consumed him at Paris, and again become a soldier, he recovered, on resuming his professional duties, his serenity of mind, and discovered resources where no other person could have thought of finding

any. He spoke at considerable length with his marshals, and showed the position of affairs to be nearly as follows.

His forces were reduced, so to speak, to what the marshals brought with them: Victor had nearly 7000 foot soldiers and 3500 horse; Marmont had 6000 foot and 2500 horse; Ney had 6000 foot. These three marshals could, besides, bring into the field 120 pieces of artillery, pretty well mounted. At a distance of twelve leagues, that is to say, at Arcis-sur-Aube, General Gerard had a reserve of 6000 men; at Troyes, a distance of eighteen leagues, Marshal Mortier had 15,000 soldiers of the old guard, infantry, and cavalry; these different troops amounting in all from 46,000 to 47,000 men. Lefebvre-Desnoettes arrived with the light cavalry of the guard, amounting to 3000 horse, with some thousand infantry, either of the young guard or battalions drawn from the dépôts, which made a total of more than 50,000 men in the quarter most threatened by the enemy. These troops did not comprise, it is true, the second division of reserve, which was being formed under General Hamelinaye at Troyes, the cavalry that was being drilled on the Seine under Pajol, and the national guards. The number was certainly small, opposed to 220,000 or 230,000 tried soldiers that were marching against the capital, without mentioning those that were daily expected. At Paris two divisions of the young guard were being formed, and some new infantry battalions; several divisions of the army of Spain were advancing by the Bordeaux road; and Macdonald was coming at last, through the Ardennes, with 12,000 men. But these reinforcements would be greatly outnumbered by those the enemy expected, and for the first shock France had only 50,000 men to oppose to 230,000. Napoleon did not tell the entire truth to his lieutenants for fear of discouraging them, but he did not withhold much. Still, according to his view of things, there was nothing to be frightened at. The enemy's forces were numerous, but divided, and it was impossible for the allies to avoid great errors, of which the emperor would profit. The allies were advancing by two routes—that of the east, from Bâle to Paris; that of the north-east, from Mayence to Paris; and it was difficult for them to do otherwise, having to combine operations with those of the army in the Low Countries. Independently of this forced separation between the army of Blücher, the ancient army of Silesia, and that of Schwarzenberg, the ancient army of Bohemia, the enemy was divided still further, from minor motives. Blücher had left troops to blockade Mayence and Metz; the columns of Schwarzenberg were far distant from one another; that of Bubna had taken the route through Geneva; that of Colloredo came by Auxonne and Burgundy; the columns of Giulay and of the Prince of Wurtemberg

through Langres and Champagne; that of Wrede through Alsace; lastly, the column of Wittgenstein, which was in the environs of Strasburg. There were still some detachments around Besançon, Belfort, Huningue, &c. It was not possible that so many scattered corps could be directed with such skill as to concentrate their operations at the same moment on the point where they were to fight. Besides, the physical structure of the locality must necessarily involve them in errors, of which the emperor hoped to profit.

In advancing towards the capital of France, either by the north-east or by the east, we arrive, after having passed the Meuse or the Saône, on the border of a basin of which Paris is the centre, and towards which the Marne and the Seine flow, forming an angle, whose sides unite at a common apex, which is Paris. Blücher was advancing at this time along one side of the angle, taking his course towards Dizier on the Marne; Schwarzenberg advanced along the other side, pursuing Mortier along the Seine. Napoleon might come down rapidly either on the one or the other, no matter which, with what forces he could assemble. To the 25,000 men of Ney, Victor, and Marmont, Napoleon was about to add the detachment of Lefebvre-Desnoettes, with an immense quantity of artillery. He could, after reascending the Marne as far as St. Dizier, turn quickly to the right, combine his forces with those of Gerard and Mortier, and come down with 50,000 men on Schwarzenberg's column. The probable result would be a glorious success.

This first advantage would stop the too confident march of the allies. Should the war be prolonged, the French might, by manœuvring skilfully in this angle formed by the Seine and the Marne, obtain other and perhaps considerable advantages. On one side, the Duke de Valmy was to occupy the different passages of the Marne by raising the national guards and barricading all the bridges; on the other side, Pajol, with the cavalry and the national guards, was to take the same precautions on the Seine, and carry up his operations to the Yonne, which is, so to speak, a detached arm of the Seine.

Between these two lines, of the Marne and the Seine there is an intermediate line, that of the Aube, which increases the difficulties for the invaders, and the means of resistance for the invaded. The enemy, induced sometimes by choice, sometimes by necessity, to divide their forces between these different rivers, and not having possession of the passages which we exclusively occupied, would furnish a thousand opportunities of fighting, which should be quickly seized, and Napoleon was not the man to neglect such opportunities. During this time the troops from Spain and the interior would arrive, the people, animated by success, would again take courage, Augereau should

return from Lyon to Besançon, and attack the enemy in the rear; the commanders of the fortresses were to make frequent sorties against the feeble forces that were blockading them, and if fortune were not absolutely adverse, bright prospects might yet dawn for France; and Caulaincourt, so strengthened, might finish by signing an honourable peace. "All is not lost," exclaimed Napoleon. War offered so many chances if one would only persevere. No one was conquered but he who was willing to be so. Without doubt, there would be adverse days; they would sometimes be obliged to fight with odds of three to one, even of four to one; but Napoleon had done so in his youth; how much better could he perform the same feat in his ripened manhood. Besides, of all the débris of the ancient army, an excellent and numerous artillery had been preserved, so that there were five or six pieces of cannon to every thousand men. Bullets were quite as good as balls. The emperor and his soldiers had partaken of every species of glory; there was yet one to acquire that would crown all the others and surpass them, that of resisting and conquering adverse fortune; after which the emperor and his soldiers should retire to the bosom of their families, and grow old together in this France, which, thanks to her heroic soldiers, after so many different phases of fortune, should have preserved her true grandeur—her natural frontiers—and acquired, moreover, an imperishable glory.

In uttering these noble sentiments, Napoleon looked calm and smiling; he looked as if his youth had returned; he appeared to believe all he said, and in fact he did believe a great part of it, so clearly did his genius-lighted mind foresee chances hidden from others. And so he ended by bestowing part of his confidence on his lieutenants, and left them less dejected than he had found them. The most animated on this occasion, he who displayed the best disposition, was Marmont. Ney was dejected. The hero of Moskowa seemed to have never recovered his spirits since the day of Dennewitz.

During the night even, Napoleon, who did not retire to rest, ordered the Duke de Valmy to assemble at Chalons the detachments that were falling back—the dépôts were to continue their route to Paris—to raise the national guards in every direction, and to barricade the boroughs and cities that had bridges across the Marne. He also enjoined Macdonald, who had completed his retrograde movement, to stop at Chalons to guard the course of the Marne. He ordered Mortier to quit Troyes and join Gerard on the Aube, an intermediary line, as we have said, between the Seine and the Marne, and to hold himself in readiness either to receive him or to come to him. He ordered Pajol to keep a strict watch over the bridges of the Seine and the Yonne, such as Nogent, Montereau, Sens, Joigny, Auxerre,

and to manœuvre his cavalry far enough on the right to intercept any parties that might endeavour to advance as far as the Loire.

On the morning of the next day, the 26th, Napoleon advanced towards Vitry. Lefebvre-Desnoettes had joined him. With Lefebvre, Marmont, Ney, and Victor, he had in all from 33,000 to 34,000 men. The enemy occupied St. Dizier. Napoleon ordered Victor to drive them from their position, a command that was obeyed with extraordinary vigour. The presence of Napoleon had restored the courage of all. The French entered St. Dizier, after having made some prisoners from the Russian corps of Landskoi. We shall now relate what meanwhile occurred amongst the allies.

Weary of waiting for Lord Castlereagh, and spite of his desire to be the first to speak with him, Alexander, who assumed that his presence was necessary everywhere, and who was often useful in many places, thought proper to take up his abode at headquarters, saying that without him the allies would do nothing but quarrel and take faulty proceedings. He had repaired to Langres, whither the allied sovereigns and ministers had accompanied him. A considerable portion of the army of Prince Schwarzenberg was disposed between the Upper Marne and the Upper Aube, between Chaumont and Bar-sur-Aube, awaiting Blucher, who was coming up by St. Dizier. Now serious consultations were held, conformable to the divisions laid down by M. de Metternich touching the various periods of the war. The first term had been reached when the allies touched the banks of the Rhine, the second was accomplished when they crossed the Vosges and the Ardennes, and now the third and most difficult remained—to march on Paris. Opinions were divided on the question of this last period of the war, and all reckoned on Lord Castlereagh, who had at length arrived, to settle the difficulty. Meanwhile, not to prolong an unbecoming silence, M. de Caulaincourt was informed that Chatillon-sur-Seine would be the spot for future negotiations. It was with difficulty Alexander was induced to make this concession, for he was already disposed to treat only within the walls of Paris. But he was now induced to yield because he had selected the locality for the new congress in France, in order to inflict on Napoleon the humiliation of negotiating in the centre of his invaded provinces. Meanwhile the different divisions of the allied armies were tending to a common centre. Whilst the army of Prince Schwarzenberg was disposed around Langres, Blucher, after having quitted Nancy, had traversed St. Dizier, had left the Russian detachment of Landskoi there, in order to spread a belief that he was about to make a descent on Chalons, following the course of the Marne, whilst, on the contrary, he

quitted the Marne to follow the course of the Aube, in order to join Schwarzenberg, to animate the main body of the army by his presence, to put an end to all indecision, and induce the allies to march boldly on Paris. Having left the corps of Count de St. Priest in the neighbourhood of Coblentz, a part of the Langeron in advance of Mayence, and the York corps in advance of Metz, he arrived with the Sacken corps and what remained of the Langeron. He had, on the way fallen in with the advance guard of Wittgenstein, commanded by Pahlen, and so arrived at the head of more than 30,000 men. He had crossed transversely from the Marne to the Aube, at the very time that Napoleon reached St. Dizier. The Marne in the upper part of its course, that is to say, at St. Dizier, is only about ten or twelve leagues distant from the Aube.

Such was the situation of the allies on the evening of the 27th of December, when Napoleon entered St. Dizier. He learned there, from the prisoners, and from the inhabitants of the district, whom he interrogated with a tact peculiar to himself, that Blucher, at the head of 30,000 men, had passed in advance of him, with the intention probably of joining the column that was in pursuit of Mortier on the Aube. He did not hesitate a moment, and immediately resolved to pursue the Prussian general until he should have overtaken and beaten him. Being able to cut off his means of communication, and intercept the supplies that might arrive from the corps left in the rear, with, moreover, the possibility of overtaking him before he should have joined Schwarzenberg, the emperor had every chance of finding Blucher in an unfortunate position, of which he would not fail to profit.

Napoleon might, in reascending the Marne as far as Joinville, have reached an excellent chaussée, which by the way of Doulevant and Soullaine abutted on the Aube in the direction of Brienne, but it would cost a day to gain this advantage. He preferred, therefore, turning directly to the right, and advancing directly by a cross-road which abutted on the Aube at the heights of Brienne. The country here was bestudded with woods and valleys, and might be traversed in two marches. He ordered Marshal Mortier and General Gerard to remain upon the Aube, and to keep their position, whilst he should take measures to join them. He directed what had arrived of Marmont's corps, with the Duhesme division of Victor's corps, to pass by the Joinville chaussée at Doulevant, which he did not like to take himself; he added to these the dragoons of Briche, to scour the country, and occupy the Nancy road, by which the troops that Blucher had left behind might arrive. With Victor, Ney, all the cavalry, and about 17,000 or 18,000 men, he marched on Brienne by the cross-road leading from Eclaron to

Montierender. There had been frost on the preceding days; on the 28th, the first day of the march, it rained. It was extremely difficult to traverse these roads, which were only used by wood-cutters. Fortunately, the artillery horses were excellent; besides, with the assistance of the peasants, who willingly gave the aid of their hands as well as the assistance of their horses, the emperor and his troops arrived, though at a late hour, at Montierender. In traversing Eclaron they found the inhabitants overwhelmed with grief at the ravages committed by the enemy. Notwithstanding the moderation which the allies had promised to exercise on their first entrance into France, they had soon relapsed into the ordinary habits of invaders, which barbarity on the part of the Russians, and a blind hatred on the part of the Prussians, rendered in the present case more cruel than usual. They pillaged and ravaged through inclination, even when they were not prompted by necessity. The afflicted peasants had addressed their complaints to Napoleon, who afforded them some relief out of his private treasure. He promised, moreover, that their church, which had been destroyed, should be rebuilt.

On the following day, the 29th, Napoleon left Montierender for Brienne. The soldiers found now, as on the evening before, much difficulty in marching on roads broken up by the rains. At length about three or four in the afternoon, Grouchy, who commanded the cavalry of the army, and Lefebvre-Desnoettes that of the guard, having debouched by the wood of Anjou, discovered in a slightly undulated plain the cavalry of Count Pahlen, supported by some light battalions of Scherbatow. A little further on was seen the small town of Brienne, with its château built on an eminence, and embosomed in trees, and further still, the Aube. Numerous troops were seen along the banks of the Aube; they appeared to be retracing their steps. We shall explain the cause of these various movements.

Blucher having arrived at Bar-sur-Aube, a small town situate on the Aube, much higher up than Brienne, had fancied that Mortier was endeavouring to pass this river to join Napoleon near the Marne, and he resolved to prevent him. He had consequently advanced on Brienne, Lesmont, and Arcis, intending to cut down the bridges of the Aube. But having learned the sudden appearance of Napoleon, he hastened to retrace his steps, and at this moment he was crossing, at the head of the Sacken corps, the town of Brienne, intending to return to Bar-sur-Aube. In order to cover this movement, Count Pahlen, with his cavalry and some light battalions of Prince Scherbatow, closely watched the plain and the border of the wood by which the French army was expected to debouch.

General Olsouvieff guarded the approaches of Brienne, which the grand park of Prussian artillery was crossing, in falling back on Bar.

No sooner did Lefebvre-Desnoettes recognise the squadrons of Count Pahlen than he rushed upon them with his light cavalry, and forced them to fall back on the battalions of Scherbatow, that were formed in squares. The Russian cavalry had taken shelter behind these battalions, and placed themselves on the right of the enemy's line, consequently facing our left. During this time Olsouvieff had deployed his forces in front of the town, and the Sacken corps, arrested in its retrograde movement, had taken up a position beside Olsouvieff, in order to protect Brienne, which it was most important to occupy, that the Prussian park of artillery might defile in safety.

The French infantry being still entangled in the wood, Napoleon was obliged to cannonade the Russian line which his horsemen could not touch, and during more than two hours hostilities were limited to an exchange of bullets, which could not be other than destructive. At length Ney and Victor began to debouch, and Napoleon ordered an instant attack. Victor had left the Duhesme division with Marmont, and Ney had only two weak divisions of the guards; we had on our side at the utmost from 10,000 to 11,000 infantry, and 6000 cavalry. Blucher had at least 30,000 men. Still, Napoleon did not hesitate, for it was no longer a question of numbers, but of time. He sent Ney straight forward on Brienne with two columns; he ordered a brigade of Victor's corps to advance on the right towards the château of Brienne, and disposed the remainder of this corps on his left, so as to threaten the road from Brienne to Bar, a movement which must render the retreat of Blucher certain.

These arrangements secured from the commencement the desired success. We had very few of the old troops; the young guard consisted of conscripts, scarcely clothed, and who had never fired a musket. They were called the "Marie Louise," in compliment to the regent under whose rule they had been raised and organised. But they were drafted into the skeletons of the old regiments, and led on by Marshal Ney. These young lads supported a violent fire without yielding an inch, and forced the Russian infantry, though three times their number, to fall back on Brienne. Unfortunately an accident that befell our left wing detracted from this success. Near this wing the feeble column of Victor that Napoleon had sent forward on the road to Bar, in order to threaten Blucher's line of retreat, was confronted by the entire Russian cavalry, which had been brought up on this side, whilst ours was on the opposite. Suddenly attacked by several thousand cavalry, Victor's infantry



were, so to speak, taken by surprise and forced to fall back. Napoleon, who was in the midst of them, ran the most imminent danger, and saw some pieces of artillery captured before his eyes. This retrograde movement of our left cooled the ardour of Ney. But at this very moment Victor's brigade, that had been despatched towards the right, succeeded in turning Brienne, forced their way through the château park, attacked and carried the castle itself. Blucher and his staff narrowly escaped being made prisoners, but the son of Chancellor Hardenberg was captured. On our side we lost the brave Rear-Admiral Baste and some of the marines of the guard, who on this day terminated a heroic life by a glorious death. The capture of this important position produced a serious impression on the Russians. Ney now attacked them briskly, entered Brienne close on their rear, and carried the town at the very instant that the enemy's artillery passed through. Blucher, annoyed at the result of this encounter, and fearing for the rear of his park of artillery, wished to make a last effort to retake Brienne and occupy it at least for some hours. He made, in fact, about ten in the evening, a furious attack on the town and château at the head of the Sacken infantry. The attack on the town was, under favour of night, at first successful, for our young troops were taken by surprise. But a brave officer, commander of the Ender battalion, and who was guarding the château with a battalion of the 56th, forced back the assailants into the town, and our soldiers, now recovered from their surprise, either captured or killed them all. This success revived the courage of our troops; they drove the Sacken infantry out of the town; and our artillery, which was numerous, firing as correctly as the darkness would permit, covered the Russians with grape-shot.

It was eleven at night when this combat finished. The confusion was so great that Napoleon did not think he could get a lodging in the château. He lay in a neighbouring village, and found himself for a short time, on regaining his bivouac, surrounded by Cossacks; he was on the point of being carried off. Berthier, thrown down in the mud, was drawn out all bruised.

On the morning of the next day the French were able to see their position more clearly. They then discovered that they had been fighting against 30,000 men, and that Blucher was retiring through the vast plain that extends beyond Brienne on the road of Bar-sur-Aube. The French pursued him with a hundred pieces of artillery, and kept up an incessant and destructive fire as far as the village of Rothière, where Blucher stopped.

This battle was highly honourable to our young soldiers, who, fighting with two to one against them, had conquered the most experienced of the allied troops, led by their bravest general.

Unfortunately it was not against odds of two to one, but of five to one, they would soon be obliged to fight, to make an effort to save France! The enemy had left in our hands about 4000 men, either killed or wounded. On our side about 3000 were put hors de combat. But as we remained masters of the battlefield, our wounded could not be reckoned as lost. The moral effect of this battle was more important than any material advantage that resulted from it. Our soldiers, utterly dispirited when Napoleon joined them at Chalons, began to recover their courage on seeing him, in fighting again by his side, and re-suming, under the mighty momentum of his genius, the habit of conquest.

Though Napoleon had not obtained all the advantages he hoped from a sudden irruption amongst the dispersed corps of the allies, still he had made them feel his presence; he had shown them that they could not reach Paris without firing a shot, as they had flattered themselves from the facility of their first movements, and he had placed himself between them and the capital, so as to block the way. With regard to the object in view, no position could be more happily chosen than Brienne.

The river Aube, on which Napoleon had just paused after the occupation of Brienne, divides into two parts, as we have said, the space lying between the Marne and the Seine. Having taken up his position on the Aube, Napoleon was at almost equal distances from the Marne and the Seine, being able, in two short marches, to reach either the one or the other, in order to stop the enemy, who would wish to advance on Paris either by Chalons or by Troyes. Having at Brienne the main body of his forces, having besides a body of troops at Chalons and another at Troyes, with the power of reinforcing alternately either the one or the other, and satisfied, in any case, to fight with troops infinitely superior in number, he was certain of arriving in time on whichever of the two routes should be most threatened. It was not very probable that the enemy would overstep this angle to carry the war beyond the Marne or the Seine. Blucher, in fact, was obliged to keep up a communication with the troops that were operating in the direction of Belgium, as Schwarzenberg was obliged to keep up a communication with those that were acting in the direction of Switzerland, so that each was somewhat restricted, Blucher in a northerly and Schwarzenberg in an easterly direction. Being obliged, besides, under penalty of the most imminent peril, not to remove at too great a distance from one another, they were unavoidably obliged to follow—Blucher the Marne, Schwarzenberg the Seine, unless they combined to march in a single column on Paris.

It was after having profoundly studied this state of things that Napoleon made his arrangements.

At this moment the two columns of the enemy seemed to constitute but one, of which Troyes and the banks of the Seine would be the natural direction. Napoleon therefore determined to concentrate the largest body of troops in the direction of Troyes. For this reason he sent Marshal Mortier, with the old guard of Arcis, towards Troyes. He placed General Gerard, with the Dufour division and the first division of reserve, at Piney, half-way between Brienne and Troyes. We must remember that at Troyes the second division of reserve had commenced to be formed, under General Hamelinaye, and that it yet amounted only to 4000 men. Napoleon ordered that it should be raised to 8000 as quickly as possible, and should be meanwhile reinforced by all the national guards of Burgundy. With Hamelinaye and Gerard, who reckoned 12,000 men, with the old guard, which comprised 15,000, Marshal Mortier had at his command 27,000 men. Napoleon hoped to add to these, within a few days, the 15,000 that were coming from Spain, which would form a total of 40,000 men, of whom 30,000 were the best troops in the world. By joining Mortier with the 25,000 under his own command, and this he could do in one long march, he would have 65,000 men to oppose to the grand army of Schwarzenberg, and this, in his position, was a considerable force, and considering his mode of tactics, almost sufficient to dispute the country. He bestowed, at the same time, fresh cares on the defence of the Seine and the Yonne, and he repeated his orders to send to Pajol, besides the small Bordeaux reserve, all the disposable cavalry at Versailles. Pajol was, with these means at his disposal, to guard Montereau, Sens, Joigny, Auxerre, and scour the banks of the Loing canal with his cavalry as far as the Loire, in order to observe any attempt that Schwarzenberg might make beyond the presumable circle of his operations.

Towards the opposite side, that is to say, towards the Marne, Napoleon renewed his orders to General Macdonald to advance on Chalons with all the troops he could bring from the Rhenish provinces; and he reiterated his commands to the Duke of Valmy to assemble at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, at Meaux, and at Chateau-Thierry, as many of the national guards as he should have time to assemble; he was to barricade the bridges of these different cities, and to collect as much provision as he could from the surrounding country. In this direction the force was not so strong as in other quarters, but it was only Blucher who could show himself here, and that by separating from Schwarzenberg, in which case, Napoleon having his eye on him as a hunter on his prey, was ready to pursue and attack him either

in rear or flank. At the same time he renewed his solicitations for the organisation of fresh battalions at Paris, and for fresh squadrons at Versailles, in order to add quickly 15,000 to the 25,000 then under his command. If he succeeded in getting these reinforcements he would be very nearly in a position to make head against all his enemies, for by joining Mortier near Troyes with 40,000 men, his numbers would amount to 80,000; if he joined Macdonald near Chalons, he could increase his troops to 55,000, and this would be nearly sufficient either against Schwarzenberg or against Blucher. Napoleon gave particular attention to tracing the military route of the army from Paris to the banks of the Aube, and he decided that the troops should pass through Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Sézanne, Arcis, and Brienne, which was the most central direction, and whither he ordered munitions of every kind to be brought. Foreseeing that he should frequently have to manœuvre from the Aube to the Marne, he ordered Sézanne to be surrounded with palisades, and large supplies of provisions and arms to be lodged there. At Brienne, where he was encamped, he fixed his position so as to profit to the utmost of the physical structure of the locality. At Dienville, on the Aube, he established his right wing, which was composed of Ricard's division, detached from Marmont, and of Gerard's, which in case of attack had orders to hasten from Piney to Dienville. He fixed his centre, consisting of Victor's troops, at the village of Rothière, in the midst of a plain intersected by the highroad, and with these was the guard as a reserve. Lastly, he placed his left wing, consisting of Marmont's corps, at Morvilliers, upon the high ground in front of the wood of Anjou. He ordered each chief of division, and especially Marmont, to surround himself with earthworks, in order to compensate for our numerical inferiority in the very probable event of an approaching attack. Thus encamped on the Aube, at almost equal distances from the two routes that the allies would be likely to take, he awaited two events—first, that his resources, which were in process of preparation, should be completed; and secondly, that his enemies should commit some gross error. Of this last chance he did not despair, for he knew his adversaries well, and he considered his situation much improved since the battle of Brienne. He wrote in this tone to his wife, to Joseph, to the Chancellor Cambacérès, to the Dukes of Feltre and Rovigo, in order that at Paris they might repeat what he said, that so the inhabitants might be tranquillised and become more zealous in providing the supplies he had ordered.\*

\* Historians and writers of memoirs not having read the correspondence of Napoleon, and not understanding the motives of his actions, pronounced him mad for having stayed at Brienne after the battle of the 29th, and after

During this time grave questions were being discussed in the camp of the allies, questions both political and military. The political question was whether the allies should treat with Napoleon; the military, whether they should pause at Langres, or whether they should immediately commence the third period of the war, without having ascertained, by an exchange of verbal communications, that peace was impossible. As might naturally be expected, the more ardent spirits, at whose head were the Prussians and Alexander, influenced by the motives we have already noticed, wished neither to negotiate nor to pause. The moderate party, at whose head were the Austrians and some prudent men of the different allied nations, desired the contrary. The task of deciding between these two parties devolved on Lord Castlereagh, who had at length arrived at headquarters.

Each party, in order to win the good graces of the English nobleman, had accorded him beforehand the chief object of his mission, that is to say, the creation of a kingdom of the Low Countries, which would procure England the advantage of depriving France of Antwerp, and of placing the estuaries of the rivers under a power capable of defending them, and would place her in a position to demand from Holland, as a recompense for such noble gifts, the Cape of Good Hope, which is the Gibraltar of the Indian Ocean, as the Mauritius is its Malta. Lord Castlereagh had, moreover, to confide to the allies another project, which he felt some embarrassment in speaking of: this was the projected marriage of the Princess Charlotte, heiress to the throne of England, with the heir of the house of Orange, a project which at any other time would have excited strong opposition. But Alexander listened to the revelation of Britain's various ambitions with the smile he accorded to all whose passions he wished to enlist in his favour, and testified his readiness to consent to every desire, without exception, expressed by England. This English project involved on the

having shown himself desirous to fight a second battle with such disproportionate forces. It is easy to see, from the explanation we have just given, whether he was mad, and whether it is wise to judge such a man without having studied his motives of action in authentic documents. Marshal Marmont, in his Memoirs, cries out against the orders Napoleon gave him to entrench himself at Morvilliers. General Koch, an excellent military writer, and of much sounder judgment than Marshal Marmont, asks how any one could think, with 30,000 men, of fighting a second battle against all the allied armies. It is clear, from what we have stated, what were Napoleon's real intentions. The enemy being able to operate both in the direction of Troyes and Chalons, Napoleon's object was to take up a position that would enable him to advance on whichever of the two routes should be threatened, not intending, as has been laid to his charge, to seek a general battle, but endeavouring to provide against eventualities with the small forces at his command, that is to say, with almost nothing. Nothing is left us but to admire the vastness of his genius and his stern determination of character in a situation so extraordinary, one to which history scarcely offers a parallel.

part of Austria a personal sacrifice—that of the Austrian Low Countries; for in this universal falling back on the past, the Low Countries would naturally have reverted to her. But as for Low Countries, she preferred the lands of Italy, and she assented to the views of England after she had been assured that she should receive in Italy an indemnification for her sacrifice. There was a last point on which Lord Castlereagh laid considerable stress: it was that no question should be raised about maritime rights. Will it be believed? Here, where those powers were assembled that were desirous of forming a navy, the question of maritime rights was scarcely glanced at; it was looked upon as a private affair, concerning at most France and England, and which ought, as a matter of course, to be regulated according to the wishes of the latter. Thus, everything had been conceded to Lord Castlereagh—the kingdom of the Low Countries, the union by marriage between this kingdom and England, and lastly, the silence of civilised Europe upon the legislation of the seas.

These concessions having been made, the next question was, with whom would Lord Castlereagh side—with those who wished for peace, or with those who demanded an uncompromising war? His own desires once gratified, the powerful Englishman was again become perfectly rational, and for example, on the question of negotiating or not negotiating with Napoleon, exhibited both good sense and diplomatic ability.

Radically, this question meant that the allies did not wish to have anything more to do with Napoleon, and that they were resolved to dethrone him and replace his dynasty by another. This question presented great difficulties to Lord Castlereagh, whether with regard to England or to Austria. The English ministers, disciples, and successors of Mr. Pitt had long been reproached, as we have said, with keeping up against France a dynastic war, and they were so much in the habit of defending themselves before Parliament against this charge, that they continued to make the defence, even when the English people themselves, encouraged by success, were no longer supposed to look upon the conduct of the ministers as blamable. As to Austria, it would be very embarrassing to the Emperor Francis to be told that the allies wished to bring him to Paris that he might deprive his own daughter of a throne. Moreover, if the expected vacancy of the throne of France inspired Lord Castlereagh with the hoping of seeing it filled by the Bourbons, whose restoration he ardently desired, it also awakened his fear of Bernadotte, for whom the Emperor Alexander had conceived an extraordinary liking since the interview at Abo, and the discussion of the Norwegian question had caused an intimacy to spring up between the courts of Russia and Sweden.

Having given profound attention to all these considerations, Lord Castlereagh came to the sage conclusion that it was better not to be precipitate, but allow the restoration of the Bourbons to arise from the position of affairs, without seeking by interference to alter the course of events. He said to both parties that they had publicly offered to enter into negotiations with Napoleon; that to refuse now to send plenipotentiaries, not only to Manheim, the place pointed out by France, but to Chatillon, the place indicated by the allies, would be to exhibit to the eyes of Europe an inconsistency that would be really embarrassing, and would be strongly condemned in England; it would be, he contended, necessary to negotiate with Napoleon, absolutely necessary, in order to maintain the dignity of the allied powers. To Alexander, who was so anxious to get to Paris, and to the Prussians, who were thirsting for vengeance, he said in private, that by adopting this line of conduct, they did not bind themselves in any way, for in offering Napoleon, purely and simply, the frontiers of 1790, they might be sure of a refusal; and even if he did accept the offer, he would be so humiliated, so weakened, that the one party ought to feel themselves revenged, and the other tranquillised; but if, on the contrary, he did not accept, then the allies would be free, and Austria having herself pronounced for the frontiers of 1790, would be obliged to yield and abandon an intractable son-in-law with whom it was impossible to come to any treaty; and thus, by not hastening events, they would gradually bring things to the point they wished, without incurring the charge of inconsistency, and without offending the court of Vienna, whose concurrence in the present war was indispensable. To Austria, Lord Castlereagh gave entire satisfaction by supporting the opinion of those who wished the negotiations should be carried on at Chatillon. He told the Emperor Francis and M. de Metternich that though he believed it difficult to establish a permanent peace with Napoleon, he considered it advisable to try to negotiate with him; that touching the question of what dynasty should occupy the throne of France, England had taken no resolution; she had even tried to dissuade the Bourbons from repairing to the continent. He added that England would sincerely endeavour to conclude a peace; but if Napoleon refused the offer now made, all further treaty should be broken off, and that in this case, the throne of France becoming vacant, Austria, guided by her conservative spirit, and understanding thoroughly Bernadotte's character, would naturally prefer the Bourbons to this adventurer, who demanded so high a price for trifling services. To all these propositions Lord Castlereagh received a full assent from the Emperor Francis and his minister, who immediately replied that they

were bound in honour to assent to the proposal of treating with Napoleon, that a sense of self-respect compelled them to take the same course, for, after all, the Emperor Francis could not forget he was a father; but if Napoleon would not on any terms listen to reason, they were determined to break with him for ever, however painful such a course might be to the father of Marie Louise. They did not regard the regency of the latter in the name of the King of Rome as anything serious. Bernadotte was only a momentary whim of Alexander's, of which it would be folly to think seriously, and should Napoleon be dethroned, Austria would prefer the Bourbons as his successors to all others. Everything was thus satisfactorily arranged between Lord Castlereagh and Austria, whom he took care to satisfy touching her material interests.

Austria, in fact, feared that the coalition, after having made use of her services, might trick her; for example, that Russia, in order to get a better portion of Poland, might give up Saxony to Prussia, which would necessitate an indemnification for the house of Saxony in Italy, a combination which was already spoken of at this period. She also entertained other subjects of fear, upon all of which Lord Castlereagh tranquillised her, pledging the word of England for the accomplishment of all Austria wished.

By a mixture of good sense, tact, and firmness, and a certain simplicity of manner peculiarly English, Lord Castlereagh acquired thus rapidly a considerable influence amongst the allies, an influence to which his position certainly contributed very much; for arriving the last, with abundant resources at his command, amongst people whose interests and opinions were utterly opposed to each other, he possessed all the means of turning the balance to which side he would, and therefore found all willing to subscribe to his wishes, in order to secure his aid in the fulfilment of theirs. Lord Castlereagh carried out his views with very little intrigue, and acting in a simple, straightforward manner, exercised a decisive influence on the destinies of Europe.

Things having been arranged as we have just related, the allies resolved on the 29th of January, the very day of the battle of Brienne, to send plenipotentiaries to Chatillon. These plenipotentiaries were, on the part of Austria, M. de Stadion; for Russia, M. de Rasoumoffski; for Prussia, M. de Humboldt; for England, Lord Aberdeen. With the latter were joined Lord Cathcart, the English ambassador at the court of Russia, and Sir Charles Stewart, English minister in Prussia. It was also arranged that Lord Castlereagh should go to Chatillon to observe personally the progress of the negotiations, to direct them if necessary, and to ascertain by observation whether a



beneficial result could be hoped from these negotiations. England was known to be so deeply interested in yielding nothing beyond the ancient limits of France, and in getting rid of Napoleon, if she could find a favourable opportunity of doing so, that none of the allies distrusted her, or thought of restricting her influence at the future congress. M. de Metternich might also have gone to Chatillon, but besides that he wished to remain near the allied sovereigns, he felt embarrassed at the idea of meeting the French negotiator, and preferred leaving this disagreeable office to M. de Stadion, who, being an old enemy of France, would experience no other embarrassment at seeing her ill-treated than what might arise from the effort to repress any ill-timed manifestation of delight.

The conditions the allies were about to propose to France were, we may now say so, after the lapse of half a century, indecent. Not only was France required to retire within the limits of 1790, though none of the allies was willing to submit to a similar restitution, but she was required to give an immediate answer to the proposition, and to reply with a "yes" or "no." Moreover, she was to be debarred all interference in the fate of the countries she was called on to give up. What was to be done with Poland, with Saxony, with Westphalia, with Belgium, with Italy; how Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Switzerland were to be treated; in all these questions France was to have no voice. France, without whose interference the fate of a European village had never been decided; France was to have no opinion on the spoils of an entire world, of which she was at this moment herself despoiled. It is true that Napoleon had often abused the rights of a victor, but amidst the intoxicating smoke of Rivoli, of Austerlitz, of Jena, of Friedland, he had never treated the conquered thus, above all, the conquered who were crushed! But at this moment France was not crushed; her enemies advanced upon her soil, so to speak, in trembling, and promising to treat her well. Without doubt, she, or rather her government, had committed faults, but in one day they had been all effaced, and if we only call to mind that two months prior to this time the allies had offered France her natural frontiers, with earnest importunities to accept them; that after a moment's hesitation she had replied by a formal acceptance, which, in justice, was binding on those who made the offer; if all these circumstances are taken into consideration, we will be pardoned for saying that the conditions proposed at Chatillon were indecent. And though the triumph of Napoleon might be that of an insupportable despotism, still that he might triumph was the wish of every honest man whose judgment was not perverted by the influence of party spirit. It was he certainly who had exposed us to these humiliations, but a

criminal who defends his native land becomes identical with the soil for which he fights!

Whilst the plenipotentiaries were preparing to set out for Chatillon, M. de Metternich took the precaution of sending M. de Floret in advance, under pretext of securing accommodation for the numerous diplomatists of the congress, but in reality to give M. de Caulaincourt, who had just arrived at Chatillon, the frankest, and we must say, the wisest advice, if adopting it had been compatible with Napoleon's glory. M. de Metternich had not yet replied to the request for an armistice that M. de Caulaincourt had been directed to make him. He explained himself now on this subject by saying, that if he had not spoken of it, it was because such a proposition had no chance of being favourably received; that he had preserved silence on the subject and would continue to do so, lest an unfair advantage might be drawn from the circumstance. The allies, he said, wished for peace or nothing, they wished it quickly, and on the terms that were about to be proposed. France need not distrust the English; they were amongst the most moderate of the allies, and to place confidence in them, especially in Lord Aberdeen, would be wise; she ought to seize, as on the wing, the present opportunity of negotiating, of which, if she did not profit, it would never again return; that in case of refusal on the part of France, the allies would adopt ideas of subversion, to which Austria, though with regret, could offer no resistance; that the Emperor Francis would be afflicted for the fate of his daughter, but should not be the less faithful to his allies, to whom he was bound by the interests of the Austrian monarchy, and by great obligations contracted during the last war; he implored his son-in-law to think seriously of these things, and to consent to sacrifices necessitated by circumstances. As for himself, as Emperor of Austria, he had been obliged to make many sacrifices; he had made them, but at a later period had been able to re-establish Austria in her proper position. It was then necessary to submit to necessity, in order to avoid greater and irreparable misfortunes.

M. de Floret was forbidden to take any steps relative to the conditions of peace, or to make the slightest revelation respecting them. But the advice he was commissioned to communicate was enough to indicate that peace was not to be offered on the Frankfort bases.

The political question having been settled, the military question remained to be solved. The Prince de Schwarzenberg, who held in the military world a position similar to that which M. de Metternich held in the political, found himself naturally at the head of those who wished to pause at Langres, either to see the effect of the negotiations, or to escape the dangers of a

march on Paris. The allied armies would have to encounter Napoleon, who would be as much strengthened in approaching the focus of his resources as the allies would be weakened in withdrawing from theirs; they should prepare for a decisive battle, and this, with a general such as he, with soldiers exasperated as his were, was always hazardous, and this battle, if they did not gain it, would deprive them in one day of the fruits of two years unhopèd-for success. To these considerations were added others, arising from the difficulty of obtaining subsistence. In fact, they were obliged to incline towards the Marne rather than towards the Seine, on account of the troops left to blockade the fortress, and in advancing they would find themselves in the midst of barren Champagne, where they would have wine and not bread, whilst they should abandon to Napoleon fertile Burgundy. This was an additional motive for awaiting the result of the negotiations and the arrival of reinforcements before involving themselves irretrievably. There were, besides, some hidden thoughts, peculiarly Austrian, to which Prince Schwarzenberg did not give utterance, but which influenced his conduct. He said within himself, that the entrance of the allies into Paris, so much desired by Alexander, would be undoubtedly a triumph for this prince, but could not be one for the father-in-law of Napoleon; that besides, to disturb still more the balance of power in Europe by pushing the success of the coalition to its extreme term, would be to disturb that balance for the advantage of Russia, without procuring any profit to Austria.

These reasons, some of which were found in the sequel to be faulty, were nevertheless of great weight. But whilst these points were being discussed, the intelligence suddenly arrived that Blücher, though obliged to leave half his troops behind at Mayence and Metz, had taken up his position in advance of the great army of Schwarzenberg, and was going to encounter Napoleon with the small remaining portion of his forces. After such an event there was no longer time for deliberation, and it became indispensable to go at once to the assistance of the rash Prussian general. An ultimate line of proceeding could be afterwards determined on. In fact, on the 30th January, the morrow of the battle of Brienne, Prince Schwarzenberg put all his corps in motion on both banks of the Aube. Blücher had retired a little behind Rothière, on the woody heights of Trannes. Prince Schwarzenberg placed behind him the corps of General Giulay and of the Prince of Wurtemberg, who, whilst pursuing General Mortier, had paused at Bar-sur-Aube. He ordered his left, composed of all the Austrian reserves under Prince Colloredo, to advance on Vandœuvre, on the left bank of the Aube, in order to threaten the right flank of Napoleon, and

hold Marshal Mortier in check. He placed his right, composed of Bavarians, at Eclance, a little beyond Trannes, and sent orders to Wittgenstein, who had already reached St. Dizier, to advance as quickly as possible to Soullaines. The d'York corps, that had been left before Metz, also received orders to repair to St. Dizier. Lastly, in the centre, where the Prince of Wurtemberg and General Giulay had already come to the support of Blücher, he placed, as a last reinforcement, the Russian and Prussian guards.

This was an immense accumulation of forces, for Blücher, after the battle of Brienne, had kept full 28,000 men, reckoning those of Sacken, Olsonvieff, and Pahlen. General Giulay and the Prince of Schwarzenberg did not bring less than 25,000 men. Marshal de Wrede got credit for a like number, as did the Prince of Colloredo. The Russian and Prussian guards were estimated at 30,000, Wittgenstein's corps at 18,000, and that of d'York 15,000 men. The whole comprised, consequently, 170,000 men, of whom 100,000 were concentrated round Rothière. Opposed to these troops was Napoleon, with one wing on the Aube, the other on the woody heights of Anjou, and the village of Rothière as sole defence for his centre. What troops had he in this position? Thirty thousand men if we may judge by the combat of the 29th of January, and perhaps 40,000 or 55,000 if Mortier, who was known to be at Troyes, could have joined him. Now or never was the moment to pounce upon him, before he could receive reinforcements, and overwhelm him with the 170,000 men who were already concentrated within the space of a few leagues, and of whom 100,000 were already assembled in the plain of Rothière. These decisive reasons put an end to the discussions of the preceding days, and it was resolved that a general engagement should take place. Besides, between Chaumont and Bar-sur-Aube there were no means of procuring provisions, so that it was necessary to advance or retire. To retire did not suit anybody's views, so that a battle, the result of any forward movement, was inevitable. Calculating on the temerity of Napoleon, on his headlong impulses, the allies thought it possible that he might take the initiative, and they were willing to allow him to do so, for they were placed on the wooded plains of Trannes and Eclance, and it would be their advantage to await him there.

The entire 31st of January was passed in this expectation. Napoleon having remained motionless, it was decided that the allies should go to seek him in the plain of Rothière. There was a certain space to be crossed, the different corps were already pretty far removed from each other, the roads were clayey and difficult to traverse, though the weather was cold, and in conse-

quence of these various reasons the battle could not commence at an early hour. Marshal Blücher, to prevent delay, doubled the number of horses to each piece of artillery; but this precaution obliged him to leave half his artillery behind. He employed the morning in passing from Trannes to Rothière. The plan of operation agreed on was as follows.

Marshal Blücher was, with Sacken, Olsouvieff, Scherbatow, and Pahlen, to attack and take Rothière, which appeared to him easy, for there was no obstacle but a village, situate in the midst of a wide plain, rising in an almost insensible acclivity. During this time General Giulay was to advance on Dienville, to carry the bridge of the Aube, that supported Napoleon's right wing, whilst the Prince of Wurtemberg, acting on the opposite side through the woods of Eclance, was to carry Giberie and Chaumeuil, small villages connected with the wood of Anjou, where Napoleon had placed his left wing. Lastly, Marshal de Wrede was to attack his left wing, formed by Marmont's troops. In order to accomplish this, he would be obliged to ford a muddy and wooded stream that runs at the foot of the village Morvilliers, and having crossed it, he should carry Morvilliers, and afterwards cross an unprotected and concave-shaped plain, bordered by the wood of Anjou. Behind the 70,000 men who were to be engaged in this manner, the Russian and Prussian guards were to march as a reserve, which would increase the number of combatants to 100,000. Lastly, at the two extremities of this line of battle, Colloredo, who was at the left of the Aube, Wittgenstein and d'York, who were crossing the forest of Soulaines, were, by executing a double circular movement, to surround Napoleon with 70,000 men, distributed along the two wings. What chance that he could extricate himself, even if he had thirty, forty, or even fifty thousand soldiers under his command?

Such was the opinion the allies formed of the situation of the French army. This situation was, at the least, quite as disadvantageous as they believed. It was not 50,000, it was not even 40,000 soldiers that Napoleon could oppose to the 170,000 that the allies led against him; he had at the utmost 32,000 men. He had besides, it is true, a well-selected position, the resources of his own genius, and the devotedness of his soldiers! We shall see what use he made of the means at his command.

From early morning he had remarked an extraordinary movement amongst Blücher's troops, and knowing that the Prince of Colloredo had appeared at the other side of the Aube, in the direction of Vandœuvre, he was inclined to quit the banks of this river and fall back on Troyes, with the intention of joining Mortier, and making head against the mass of the allies that seemed to be taking this route; but about the middle of the day

he learned from some fugitives and from the manifest dispositions of the enemy, that he was about to be attacked in front, at Rothière. Once convinced of this fact, it would not have been consistent with his temperament, nor would it have been good tactics, to retire. He resolved to make head against the storm, and warmly receive the expected attack, and to retire afterwards, when he should have shown that he was neither discouraged nor conquered.

Napoleon, as we have said, had placed his right wing at Dienville on the Aube, where the Dufour division was posted under General Gerard, and the Ricard division, detached from Marmont's corps. His centre, formed of Victor's troops, was posted at Rothière, intersecting the highroad, and extending as far as Giberie; his left was drawn up in front of the wood of Anjou, protected by the stream and village of Morvilliers. This last, composed of Marmont's corps, which at this moment was reduced to the Lagrange division, did not number more than 4000 men. There were certainly several pieces of cannon that Marshal Marmont disposed skilfully, so as to check the Bavarians, should they attack the stream and village of Morvilliers. Lastly, with two divisions of the young guard, with all the cavalry, and a numerous artillery, Napoleon held himself in reserve behind Rothière, a little towards the left, so as to aid either Marmont or Victor. It is certain, from the rolls called over that morning, that he had not more than 32,000 men under his command.

The firing did not commence until about two in the afternoon. Blucher, after having traversed with some difficulty the space that separated him from our positions, advanced on Rothière in two strong columns, one composed of the troops of Sacken, the other of those of Olsouvieff and Scherbatow. A brisk cannonade commenced on both sides, but as we were well supplied with artillery, it was no advantage to the Russians that Blucher commanded on that day. The latter soon wished to operate more seriously, and directed masses of infantry to advance against the principal houses of Rothière. It was the Duhesme division of Victor's corps that occupied this village. Our young soldiers, well sheltered in the houses and gardens with barricades at all the outlets, replied by a determined fire to the attempts of Blucher's soldiers, and succeeded in arresting their progress. Marshal Victor, who appeared dejected on leaving Strasburg, had recovered all the energy of youth at this important moment, and he was in the thickest of the fight giving an example to his soldiers, who nobly imitated him.

Whilst that at the centre Blucher was struggling with these difficulties, General Giulay having defiled behind him, in order to reach Dienville, encountered there our right wing, drawn up in front of this town, on the banks of the Aube. General

Gerard had dispersed a part of his troops within the town, and the remainder in the plain in connection with Rothière, and under the protection of a great many pieces of artillery. General Giulay, received at first, like Blucher, by a strong cannonade, was not more successful, and endeavoured in vain to enter the town himself. He lost a great number of soldiers in these vain attempts. To obtain a better chance of success by attacking Dienville on both sides of the Aube, he transported the Fresnel brigade to the left bank of this river by the Unionville bridge situate a little higher up. This brigade, after having crossed the Aube and arrived before Dienville, found the bridge barricaded, and themselves exposed to a brisk musketry fire from a multitude of sharpshooters that lay ambushed along the bank of the river. The brigade, under these circumstances, took up a position on the summit of a hillock opposite Dienville, and directed a brisk cannonade across the Aube. The Dufour division, drawn up on the opposite bank, supported this discharge with extraordinary firmness, and replied by a not less destructive fire.

Thus, on our right as well as on our centre, the allies had encountered a most obstinate resistance. On our left, the Prince-Royal of Wurtemberg, after having cleared the wood of Eclance, had tried to carry the little hamlet of Giberie, that flanked Rothière, and establish a line of communication with the wood of Anjou, occupied by Marmont. There was here a detachment of Marshal Victor's that, overpowered by numbers, was obliged to abandon the hamlet. But Marshal Victor, putting himself at the head of one of his brigades, retook Giberie, and repulsed the Wurtembergers to a considerable distance. Lastly, at the extremity of this battlefield, where the allies' line was sweeping round our left flank, the Bavarians, after having debouched by the forest of Soullaines, and deployed along the brook of Morvilliers, were stopped by Marshal Marmont, who had chosen an admirable position for his artillery, of which he made a most formidable use.

Thus, after two hours of violent cannonade and fusilade, the enemy had not gained on any side an inch. But they could not brook to be held in check by an army that did not appear to number more than 40,000, whilst they had about 100,000 men, without reckoning the two extreme wings.

The allied troops tried to make a decisive effort about four in the afternoon. Blucher, behind whom the Russian and Prussian guards were drawn up, marched sword in hand on Rothière, whilst at the pressing solicitation of the Prince of Wurtemberg, the Emperor Alexander sent a brigade of his guards to second this prince in the attack on Giberie. The conflict then became terrible. The Sacken columns entered

Rothière and were driven back; they again forced their way in, having only to contend with the Duhesme division, which did not at most amount to more than 5000 men. This division, led on by Marshal Victor in person, did not abandon the post until half their number was cut to pieces. During this time, in order to occupy the space between Rothière and Giberie, the cavalry of the guard, followed by their artillery, threw themselves on the cavalry of Pahlen and Wassiltsikoff, and threw them back on the infantry of Scherbatow. But arrested by the Russian infantry, and charged in flank by a corps of dragoons, they lost in this affair some of their cannon that they had not time to bring away. The Prince of Wurtemberg, supported by the Russian guards, entered Giberie; and the Bavarians, on their side, ashamed of seeing their progress arrested by Marmont's few soldiers, at length crossed the stream that stood in their way, carried the village of Morvilliers, and debouched in the plain that lies at the foot of the wood of Anjou. This movement was made for the purpose of getting out of range of our artillery, which was doing great execution.

The moment was critical, and Napoleon, who had not ceased to direct every movement, himself exposed to a hail of projectiles, now resolved, though night was already closing in, not to leave his adversaries in possession of so many advantages. Feeling that it was only after intimidating the enemy that he could make a retreat either with honour or in safety, he ordered the two divisions of the young guards, his last resource, to advance rapidly on the enemy's two principal points. He ordered the Rothenbourg division, under Marshal Oudinot, to advance on Rothière, and overturn every obstacle in the way, whilst he took himself the command of the Meunier division, and advanced to the left, between Marmont, who had fallen back on the village of Chaumeuil, and Victor, who had lost Giberie. These young troops, led on by Napoleon and Oudinot, advanced with the resolution of despair. The Meunier division, stationed between Chaumeuil and Giberie, stopped short the progress of the Bavarians and the Wurtembergers. Oudinot, at the head of the Rothenbourg infantry, deployed his troops without flinching beneath a terrific fire, drove back the enemy's opposing masses, and even succeeded in taking possession of the village of Rothière. Night was already far advanced; the men fought desperately hand to hand in the village, and it was ten at night, when the enemy could no longer molest our retreat, that the heroic Oudinot fell back from Rothière on Brienne. Our retrograde movement was executed in good order, covered by the divisions of the young guard and Milhand's dragoons, who, alternately charging and charged, kept their ground, but with loss of the artillery, which it was impossible to bring away. The



quantity of artillery was too great in proportion to the infantry to be protected, and therefore after using the cannon we abandoned them, but saved the gunners and horses. As to the rest, whilst the centre, composed of the guard of the cavalry and the debris of Victor's troops, retired without molestation, the left, under Marmont, escaped fortunately through the wood of Anjou, and the right, under Gerard, that had behaved so gallantly at Dienville, fell back without check along the Aube, after having killed or wounded a considerable number of the enemy.

Thus finished this terrible day, where the resistance of 32,000 men against 170,000, of whom 100,000 were engaged, was, it may be said, a phenomenon in military warfare. This resistance was owing to the skill and energy of General Gerard, to the good use Marshal Marmont made of his artillery, to the heroic devotedness of the Marshals Oudinot and Victor, and above all, to *Napoléon's* indomitable tenacity of purpose. But for his iron will he would have been driven into the Aube. His mode of action naturally made the enemy pause, and so, for the moment, saved his fortune. We lost about 5000 men killed or wounded, and put hors de combat 8000 or 9000 of the enemy, thanks to the advantage of our position and the extensive use of our artillery. This difference, though a satisfaction in one sense, was no great military success, for the smallest losses were much more seriously felt by us than very large ones would be by the coalition. We sacrificed fifty pieces of artillery, but saved our artillerymen and horses, which proves that we abandoned these cannon, and that they were not captured by the enemy. *Napoleon* fought this battle with such disproportionate numbers only to cover his retreat. During the night he crossed the bridge of Lesmont without confusion, and reached Troyes in good order. As the entire night would be occupied in defiling, and as he might be attacked by the enemy at the break of day, he left Marmont's corps, which was only composed of the Lagrange division, on the right of the Aube and on the heights of Perthes, so as to make *Blucher* believe that the entire French army was there ready to renew the combat. This corps did not run any serious risk, for it was protected by the narrow but deep Voire, and held all the bridges, behind which the men were sure to find refuge, should they be too briskly attacked.

In fact, the next day, the enemy, fatigued with the combat of the previous evening, and not waking very early, advanced on one side towards the bridge of Lesmont, and on the other towards the heights of Perthes, and paused in a kind of doubt on seeing Marmont's corps drawn up in battle array. Whilst the enemy were inquiring of one another where the French army was, we had defiled quite close to them by the bridge of Lesmont, and Marmont himself, after having played his

part in keeping up the illusion, withdrew by passing the Voire at Rosnay.

However, Marmont was pursued along the Aube by Marshal de Wrède. After having occupied the heights of Perthes for a considerable time, and in a threatening attitude, he had crossed the bridge of Rosnay before the eyes of the Bavarians, and then hastened to destroy it. But closely pressed, he had only been able to tear off the *tablier*, and had left the piles standing, whose tops rose some feet above the water. Whilst he was drawing up his few remaining troops in order of battle on the other side of the Voire, he perceived some detachments of the enemy attempting a passage below Rosnay. He first sent some cavalry to oppose them, but finding these not sufficient, and that from 2000 to 3000 men had already crossed the river, he hastened to the spot with a few hundred men, for if this passage were not effectually opposed, his corps might be cut off from the Aube, and Napoleon then thrown back into the midst of Wittgenstein and d'York's troops, which means, in other words, he would be surrounded and taken. Marmont immediately rushed sword in hand on the detachment that had crossed the Voire by the aid of some piles and planks, attacked them briskly, and forced them back into the river. At this sight the cavalry made a desperate charge, and in the twinkling of an eye cut down or made prisoners 1000 men. This exploit having been accomplished below Rosnay, Marmont was recalled to Rosnay itself by a like attempt. Foreseeing that a passage might be attempted at this half-destroyed bridge, he left a very intelligent captain of artillery in ambush there with his company. This captain had allowed a certain number of the enemy to pass one by one over the dismantled piles of the bridge, and had then shot them when within musket range. Marmont's arrival finished them. Thus a body of about 3000 French had during an entire day stopped the progress of 25,000 Bavarians, and had killed or captured more than 2000 men. This double battle was a real advantage, for by exciting to the highest degree the confidence of our soldiers in themselves, and by rendering the allies infinitely more circumspect, it contributed to retard their movements, which permitted us to accelerate ours, the only resource that remained in the reduced state of our forces.

Napoleon having crossed the Aube without accident, passed the 2nd of February at Piney, and the next day, the 3rd, fixed himself at Troyes. This last battle, so energetically sustained against forces so superior in number, though a great military achievement, exposed us to great danger. The allies had assembled all their forces between Bar-sur-Aube and Troyes, and if they persevered in marching, thus combined, on Paris, it was

doubtful whether the French, even in resisting to the last man, could arrest their progress. After the battle of the 29th of January, and the combat of the 1st of February, the utmost amount of troops that remained to Napoleon was from 25,000 to 26,000. Mortier, whom he had just joined at Troyes, had perhaps 15,000 men, General Hamelinaye 4000, which raised the entire number of our disposable forces to 45,000 men. Prince Schwarzenberg, with Wittgenstein and Blücher, commanded full 160,000 men, deducting the losses of the two last battles; and this was not all, for Blücher was about to be reinforced, not only by d'York, who was coming from Metz, but by Langeron, who was ready to come from Mayence, and Kleist, who was withdrawing from the blockade of Erfurth, all three of whom were to be replaced by troops hastily raised in Germany. It was impossible for the French to say to what number the allied armies might amount within a few days. It was possible that they might find themselves with 40,000 or 50,000 men opposed to 200,000, and then what defence could they make? The soldiers still reposed an unshaken confidence in Napoleon, though some amongst the younger deserted; but the commanding officers, who on the field of battle gave an example of the utmost devotedness, and who had sufficient experience to perceive the danger of an almost desperate situation, but not sufficient genius to discern the real extent of our resources, abandoned themselves, when no longer under fire, to utter dejection. They were plunged in profound sadness, which they made no effort to conceal. This dejection spread gradually to the inferior ranks, and winter, with its sufferings and its privations, was not calculated to dispel the gloom. In Franche-Comté, in Alsace, in Lorraine, the inhabitants had displayed excellent dispositions, and a true spirit of fraternity with regard to the army. At Troyes and its environs, where the disposition of the people was less friendly, where the burdens of war were already severely felt, and where the people were strongly irritated against the government, the reception given to the army was not very cordial, and vexatious conflicts between the soldiers and the peasants added still darker shades to the gloomy picture.

Napoleon, though deeply affected, was not, however, utterly cast down. He still discovered resources where nobody suspected any, endeavoured to make others perceive them, and displayed, not serenity or gaiety, which would have been an unbecoming affectation under such circumstances, but a tenacity of purpose, and an indomitable firmness, quite sufficient to plunge into despair those who might have wished to see him more disposed to submit to the pressure of events. Neither disturbed nor disconcerted, above all, not exhibiting the slightest

weakness, supporting bodily fatigue and trouble of mind with a firmness superior to his physical strength, ever in the thickest of the fight, with steady eye and clear-toned voice, he bore the penalty of his faults with a degree of resoluteness that might have effaced them, could great qualities be a sufficient excuse for the ills they have often caused mankind.

Still, the confidence that Napoleon displayed, though in part simulated, was not without foundation. If he had only 45,000 men, including those he brought back from Brienne, and Mortier's old guard, and Hamelinaye's small division, he expected 15,000 old soldiers, who were coming en poste from Spain, and who had already arrived at Orleans. This reinforcement would increase his army physically to 60,000 men, and morally to still more. The brave Pajol, who, with 1200 horse and 5000 or 6000 national guards, defended the bridges of the Seine and the Yonne that he had barricaded, as, for example, Nogent-sur-Seine, Bray, Montereau, Sens, Joigny, Auxerre, expected 4000 of the Bordeaux reserve. There would be within a few days at Paris two divisions of the young guard completely fit for service. There were besides twenty-four regimental dépôts that had been transported to Paris, and which would furnish, by the help of conscripts, twenty-four battalions of from 500 to 600 men each, which would afford, reckoning the two divisions of the young guard, four divisions of infantry of more than 20,000 men. Here were, besides, accoutrements for some thousand horsemen at Versailles, and wherewith to mount eighty cannon at Vincennes. Here were 30,000 additional soldiers, that would, within eight or ten days, raise the total of Napoleon's forces to 90,000 men. Lastly, at Montereau, at Meaux, at Soissons, brave fellows thronged to be drafted into the skeleton regiments of the national guards, where they could utilise their patriotism. All was not lost if we could only preserve our sang-froid a few days longer. Unfortunately there was a deficiency of two things at Paris, not of men, we repeat the assertion, but of money and muskets. As to money, when M. Mollien, quite at bay, did not know where to find 100,000 francs, an order on the treasurer of the civil list realised the sum at the Tuileries. It was not so easy to procure arms. There were, as we have said, 6000 new muskets, besides 30,000 old that wanted repairs. The workmen laboured to render the latter fit for service, but the daily repairs scarcely supplied the daily demand, and the reserve of arms fit for service diminished visibly. Clothes were made tolerably fast; horses began to arrive. Napoleon was writing incessantly to Joseph and to Clarke, endeavouring to stimulate the idleness of the one and the incapacity of the other; he traced for them from point to point what they were to do; sent every day intelligence of his

personal affairs to the empress and Prince Cambacères; begged them to keep up their spirits and preserve their tranquillity of mind; assured them that nothing had yet been lost, that the enemy had not gained any decisive advantage, and that by constancy and energy all would be saved.

Whilst he was endeavouring to prepare his resources and inspire confidence in them, there remained one happy and fast approaching chance, which was in reality his sustaining mental force, and of whose realisation he had a presentiment.\* At the actual moment he was threatened with a great and fatal battle fought beneath the walls of Paris against forces that quadrupled his. This was the sad probability, if the enemy persisted in advancing en masse. But might not the enemy's forces divide? Amongst the different routes of the Yonne, the Seine, the Aube, the Marne, might they not be tempted to divide, to extend themselves, either to seek provisions, or to keep up a communication with the troops in the north and east, or, in short, from a thousand different motives? Would not Blucher, who had forces on the Marne and further off, for he left General Priest on the frontiers of Belgium—would he not go to meet them? Schwarzenberg, who had forces on the Geneva route and even as far as Lyon—would he not extend an arm to Dijon? To these chances might there not be added moral causes of separation, such as jealousies, dislikes, the desire of acting independently of each other? For example, would not Blucher advance along the Marne, leaving Schwarzenberg on the Seine, in order to be more free to follow his own plans? Napoleon suspected strongly these possibilities, and on the second day of his retreat from Troyes his suspicions became almost certainty.\* If things were really so, his plans were fixed; he would leave a corps in front of Schwarzenberg, then making a covert and rapid movement, he would pursue and overwhelm Blucher, after which he would return and attack Schwarzenberg. But he did not speak of this project lest his secret might be divulged and come to the ears of the enemy through an indiscretion on the part of the staff. The presence of a compact mass, four times superior in number to the French army, was a cloud that dimmed every eye and terrified every heart. The French saw themselves obliged to fight a pitched battle beneath the walls of Paris, with forces so disproportioned that victory would be impossible; they wished at any price to dispel this danger, and to dissipate it by establishing peace on any terms. Having arrived on the 3rd of February at Troyes, Napoleon was, in fact, assailed by the remonstrances of M. de Berthier, who had always been prudent, and by M. de Bassano, who had become so since our

\* Napoleon made some obscure but positive observations on this subject to the war minister.

late misfortunes. That we ought to make a treaty on any terms at Chatillon was their fixed opinion, expressed in the most urgent manner.

And we could certainly make a treaty, for the plenipotentiaries of the different allied powers had just arrived at Chatillon, all willing to subscribe to peace, but on the double bases of the frontiers of 1790, and of our exclusion from all future European arrangements. Received with frigid politeness, M. de Caulaincourt had easily divined that severe propositions were prepared for him, very different to the Frankfort bases. M. de Floret, secretary to the Austrian legation, commissioned to give in secret friendly advice to the French negotiator, without explaining himself categorically, had said—"Make a treaty on any terms, for this opportunity is like that of Prague, like that of Frankfort; once neglected, it will never return."

M. de Caulaincourt, alarmed at this advice, and wishing to know what were the sacrifices about to be demanded from France, had not been able to obtain any explanation from M. de Floret; but he ascertained very clearly that the emperor would be obliged to submit to much greater sacrifices than those demanded at Frankfort, if he wished to save Paris, and with Paris, the imperial throne. He had therefore written to Napoleon, to beg additional powers to negotiate, for the instructions that enjoined him to demand not only the Schelde, but the Wahal; not only the Alps, but a part of Italy; not only a legitimate influence over the fate of the provinces given up, but the possession of a portion of them for Napoleon's brothers—these instructions presented a terrible contradiction to the actual state of things. M. de Caulaincourt had asked for additional powers without saying to what extent; he had made the request on his knees, not like a man who stoops to power to save his fortune and his life, but like a worthy citizen who submits to humiliation for the love of his country. Distrusting M. de Bassano, whom he did not like, and by whom he was not liked, whom he erroneously looked on as the cause of Napoleon's obstinacy, he had written to Berthier, to pray him, in the first instance, to send him exact information as to the situation of military affairs; and in the next place, to beg him—the noble and faithful companion of the emperor's dangers—to use all his influence to induce him to yield to the pressure of circumstances.

Thus Napoleon had to endure, not only the letter of M. de Caulaincourt, but the most earnest entreaties of Berthier, and of M. de Bassano himself, who now was far from urging his master to resistance. Fresh intelligence arriving on every side, quickened still more the zeal of those who surrounded Napoleon. In fact, the Austrian corps seemed to have extended

along our right beyond the Yonne. From 4000 to 5000 Cossacks had advanced beyond Sens, and were threatening Fontainebleau. On our left towards the Marne, the aspect of things was not less threatening. Marshal Macdonald, who had received orders to fall back on Chalons, and take up a position there, had been driven out by the enemy, and forced to retreat to Chateau-Thierry. It was even said that he was thrown back on Meaux. The 11th and 5th infantry corps, the 2nd and 3rd cavalry that he brought with him, and that Napoleon estimated at 12,000 men at least, were reduced to 6000 or 7000. Bands of fugitives, after having quitted the army, had wandered between Meaux and Paris, spreading everywhere bad news. The Parisians fancied they saw the enemy pouring down on them by three routes, that of Auxerre, that of Troyes, that of Chalons, and only on one of these three did they discern a force capable of protecting them—that which Napoleon commanded in person, and which had, so report went, the advantage in the combat of the 29th of January, but the disadvantage in that of the 1st of February. Movements in Vendée were spoken of, and this country, lately so tranquil and grateful to Napoleon, appeared ready to revolt. In short, to add to the general dismay, it was announced that Murat, even he, the brother-in-law of the emperor, to whom he owed his throne, had just then burst every bond of political alliance, of love of country, and of family ties, by making a hostile movement in the rear of Prince Eugène. This influx of bad news had completely uprooted public tranquillity. The empress, dreadfully alarmed, was incessantly sending either for Joseph or the chancellor, to confide to them her vexations, for at sight of the approaching danger, she was dying of fear for her husband, her son, and herself. There was a report current in Paris that the court was about to retire to the Loire, and every day an anxious crowd assembled round the Tuileries to make sure that the carriages in which the empress and the King of Rome every day took a drive in the wood of Boulogne, were not travelling carriages intended to set out for Tours.\*

These circumstances irritated Napoleon without shaking his resolution. Where everybody saw subjects of fear he rather

\* According to my established habit of never making imaginary descriptions, I wish to mention that I have borrowed these particulars, not alone from the correspondence of King Joseph, part of which has been published, but also from those of Prince Cambacérès, of the Duke of Rovigo, and the Duke of Feltre, which are unpublished, and remarkable for minuteness of detail. The circumstances recorded in my pages are painted in warmer colours in the letters from which I have drawn the facts. I rather soften than heighten the account, knowing that we must always make allowance for the exaggeration of the time in which the events occurred, though this very exaggeration is a distinctive mark of the epoch, and which must be preserved by the historian in some degree.

perceived causes of hope. He suspected, indeed, that an Austrian corps was advancing towards him, and he was thinking of throwing himself on these troops and overwhelming them. The danger of Macdonald, the manner in which he was pursued, induced him to believe that the main army of the allies had divided, and thrown one wing on the Marne. It was what he had all along wished for and hoped. On this account he had sent Marmont forward to Arcis-sur-Aube, and had enjoined him to reconnoitre even as far as Sézanne and Fère-Champenoise, that so he might become acquainted with all the enemy's movements, and be ready to take advantage of the first error.

But the emperor felt called on to reply to the entreaties of M. de Berthier, of M. de Bassano, and of M. de Caulaincourt, and above all, he felt the necessity of allaying the alarm that prevailed at Paris. "Further powers to treat," he said, "what did they mean by these expressions? Did they mean sacrifices in Holland, in Germany, in Italy; he was ready to make them. The Wahal! He was ready to abandon it, and fall back on the Meuse and Schelde, provided that he might keep Antwerp. He would sacrifice Cassel and Kehl, though these points were the real suburbs of Mayence and Strasburg. He would even dismantle Mayence to tranquillise Germany; but on condition of keeping the Rhine. In Italy he would give up everything, even Genoa, provided he might conserve the Alps, and if possible, something for the faithful Prince Eugène. But to consent to retain less than France, the veritable France, whose limits had been fixed by the Revolution of 1789, would be hopelessly to dishonour himself. But the allies, he said, did not in reality wish to treat with him; they wished to destroy him, his dynasty, and above all, the results of the French Revolution. In fact, the proposal to treat was only a lure. If there were any sincerity in the late proposals to negotiate, it was probably because the allies were concocting conditions so humiliating that he would be dishonoured by accepting them, and this dishonour would serve as a counterpoise in public opinion to the influence of his character and the force of his genius. But it was impossible for him to consent to such things. To descend from the throne, to meet death itself, would be for him, who was only a soldier, a trifle contrasted with dishonour. The Bourbons might accept the France of 1790; they had never known any other, and it was that which they had the glory of creating. But he, who had received from the Republic, France, with the Rhine and the Alps, what could he reply to the republicans of the Directory, if they flung back on him the fulminating apostrophe he had addressed to them on the 18th Brumaire! Nothing: he should stand confounded.



He was asked to do what was impossible, for he was asked to consent to his own dishonour."

Shall we dare avow it, we who during this long recital have not ceased to blame Napoleon's policy, we who condemned as useless, irrational, and even fatal every project of ambition that extended beyond the Rhine and the Alps? It seems to us that on this occasion Napoleon's view of matters was more correct than that of his advisers; but as it always happens, when a man has been long acting erroneously, he was neither listened to nor believed when he was in the right. His diplomatic agents, disillusioned too late, his generals, worn out from fatigue, conjured him to remain emperor of no-matter-what empire, because whilst he remained emperor they would retain the position they then held. France might be circumscribed in her limits, but she would still be great, because she would still be France, and they would lose nothing of their individual greatness. In their eyes, the Rhine, the Alps, constituted perhaps the grandeur of Napoleon and of France, but in no way touched their personal importance. Sad process of reasoning, which fatigue rendered excusable in worn-out soldiers, and fear made pardonable in justly alarmed diplomatists. Undoubtedly the conquests that Napoleon had made from the Rhine to the Vistula, from the Alps to the Straits of Messina, from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar, were not worth the blood they had cost, and indeed, would not have been worth the life of one man. But, on the other hand, Frenchmen might have been legitimately called upon to shed the last drop of their blood to defend the natural frontiers of France, Napoleon might have been lawfully required to risk his throne and his life for the same object, and in our opinion, after so many errors, after so many follies, so many extravagances of every kind, he alone was right when he said that his honour was demanded when he was asked to yield an inch of the natural frontiers of France, those frontiers conquered by the Republic, and which had been transmitted to him as a deposit. But the one party through affection, the others through exhaustion, all influenced by the desire of self-conservation, said to him—"Sire, save your throne, and in saving that you will save everything."

The entreaties addressed to the emperor were becoming more candid and more frequent. In short, the alarm increased from hour to hour. Napoleon, not wishing to individualise the sacrifices he was willing to make, and counting on the pride of M. de Caulaincourt, and on his patriotism, sent him a *carte blanche*. This was the term used. He had well-founded hopes, from his knowledge of M. de Caulaincourt's character, that the latter would not see, in the *carte blanche*, authority to consent to great sacrifices; but if, however, great sacrifices were needed to

snatch Paris from the hands of the enemy, he was free to act, and might save the capital. Strange deception—practised with regard to himself, with regard to M. de Caulaincourt, with regard to his honour, as he understood it, for in the actual state of things he either yielded nothing or he abandoned the natural frontiers; strange deception, and we must add, sole weakness of this great man, which was wrung from him by the importunities of his lieutenants and his ministers, and which, however, as we shall soon see, was but of short duration.

Having forwarded these additional powers to M. de Caulaincourt, the emperor gave some orders suited to the extreme circumstances in which he was placed. The obstinate silence he had observed towards Murat had at length determined the latter to enter into negotiations with Austria. It was a defection as blamable as that of Bernadotte, but induced by less vicious motives. Inconstancy of character, the insatiable desire to reign, fear, an intense jealousy of Prince Eugène, had at first disturbed and at last corrupted the heart of Murat. His wife, it must be said, was much more guilty than he, for, bound to Napoleon by the closest bonds of duty, she had, when in converse with the French minister, affected the greatest grief and a total loss of influence with her husband, and was at the same time carrying on negotiations with the allies through the intervention of M. de Metternich.\* The conditions of Murat's treason were as follows: Murat was to keep Naples and give up Sicily, for which he would be indemnified by an Italian province. He promised in return to march with 30,000 men against Prince Eugène. He had kept his word, he had advanced towards Rome, had sent forward a division against Florence, another against Boulogne, without saying precisely what he was about to do, for he still retained sufficient good feeling to blush for his conduct, and he had sufficient craft to hide from the French officers, whose services he greatly needed, that he was going to employ them against France. He had asked General Miollis to give him up the castle of St. Ange, and had requested the Princess Eliza to let him take possession of the citadel of Leghorn, pretending that the occupation of these places was necessary to carrying out the emperor's designs. General Miollis and the Princess Eliza had refused.

This intelligence, as may be easily conceived, had irritated Napoleon exceedingly; but he had dissembled his feelings through consideration for the numbers of French living in Italy. He had ordered the Duke of Otranto to visit Murat's headquarters again, and agree to the surrender of the fortified

\* This sad fact, in the midst of so many others, can no longer be doubted since the publication of Lord Castlereagh's papers. It is there quite evident that the queen was the principal agent in the negotiations.

posts that the King of Naples demanded ; but he had sworn in his heart to be revenged for this black ingratitude, and he, on the spot, devised a means of embarrassing Murat in a most serious manner. Murat, in his treaty with Austria, had, under the vague term of a province in the Peninsula, hoped to get possession of all Central Italy. To send back the Pope to Rome at this moment would be to put an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of Murat's ambition. Napoleon had, as we have already seen, sent Pius VII. to Savona, and the Pontiff had been along the way received by the people with the warmest expressions of respect and affection. Napoleon ordered that the Pope should be conducted to the outposts, with the respect with which he had always been treated, announcing to him that he was free to return to Rome. Thus finished this other drama, so similar to that of Spain, by the sending back of the prince whose States the emperor had designed to seize in taking possession of his person, and whom he was only too happy to set at liberty now, in the hope of drawing some advantage from a recantation dictated by the embarrassment of his own circumstances.

But what was more important than either Murat or the Pope, was to profit of the opportunity of abandoning Italy to herself, another tardy retraction, but very useful if it had been made in time. As long as Murat continued inactive, Prince Eugène could, by defending himself on the Adige, keep his position in Lombardy, spite of some attacks made by the English on his right and his rear ; but should Murat take him in the rear, on the right bank of the Po, he would have no further means of resistance, therefore Napoleon ordered him to fall back as speedily as possible on Turin, Suza, Grenoble, and Lyon, to come to the assistance of France, whose preservation was far more important than that of Italy.

Thus occupied in undoing what he had done, Napoleon gave his last orders with regard to Ferdinand VII., who was burning with impatience to recover his liberty. Intelligence had at length been received from the Duke of San Carlos. He had en route met the Spanish regency, that, after long hesitations, had quitted Cadiz, and determined to come to Madrid and hold their sittings in the city where, during three centuries, the government of Spain had resided. The Duke of San Carlos had seen at Aranjuez the members of the regency and the principal personages of the Cortes. Their reply had been given without either doubt or hesitation. At first none of them wished to separate from the English, with whom they hoped soon to invade the south of France ; neither were they anxious to bring back Ferdinand VII., and restore him authority which they had conserved for him, and of which, it was very easy to

foresee, he would soon make a bad use. Influenced by these combined motives, they refused to subscribe to a treaty made by a captive, and with many protestations of regret, obedience, and devotedness, they declared they could not consider themselves bound to recognise the signature of the king until he stood on Spanish soil, in the full enjoyment of his liberty. They cited, in justification of their conduct, a very plausible reason, which was an article of the Constitution of Cadiz, which said expressly that any stipulation signed by the king in a state of captivity should be deemed void. The Duke of San Carlos had been sent back to Valençay with this article of the Constitution, upon which the unfortunate Ferdinand seemed plunged into despair.

There was no longer time for hesitation; it was better to run the risk of being deceived, but take, at the same time, the chance of finding Ferdinand VII. faithful to his word, than to detain him prisoner; a fact which was the radical cause of the war with the Spaniards, and obliged us to leave on the Adour troops of which we had the most urgent need on the Marne and the Seine. Consequently, Napoleon commanded the liberation of Ferdinand VII. and the other Spanish princes detained at Valençay; he ordered that they should immediately join Marshal Suchet, requiring that they should pledge their word of honour for the faithful execution of the Valençay treaty. Napoleon was thus making an effort to recover the troops that garrisoned Sagonta, Mequinenza, Lerida, Tortosa, and Barcelona, who would immediately recross the Pyrenees. If Marshal Soult, who was detained at Bayonne by the presence of the English, could not be brought up to Paris, Marshal Suchet, who was not placed in similar circumstances, and who was opposed by an army infinitely less formidable, might be brought back to Lyon. Napoleon reiterated his orders to send thither all the troops that were not indispensably necessary at Roussillon, and to prepare to follow himself with the rest of his army. Should Marshal Suchet arrive at Lyon with 20,000 men, and join Eugène with 30,000, the fate of the war would be evidently changed, for the allies would not remain between Troyes and Paris when 50,000 old soldiers were advancing from Lyon to Besançon.

These orders being expedited during the days of the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th of February, days that Napoleon employed in observing the movements of the enemy, he also gave some others relative to the defence of Paris. The feeling of alarm went on increasing in this capital at every retrograde step made by Marshal Macdonald on the Marne, for the fugitives from the army and the surrounding country spread terror as they fled. Joseph had asked for instructions touching the

empress, the King of Rome, and the princesses of the imperial family; he asked whether in case of danger he should keep them in Paris. There was certainly no question of evacuating Paris: Napoleon had, on the contrary, given orders that it should be defended to the last extremity; but if the enemy appeared, should one of the princes remain with extraordinary powers and orders to resist to the last, and send beyond the Loire the imperial family, the empress, the King of Rome, the ministers, and chief dignitaries? This question was openly discussed in the streets of the capital, and proved how strongly the public mind was agitated. Louis, ex-King of Holland, who had returned to France since the misfortunes of his brother, proposed that, should the court and members of the government leave, he would close the gates and make a determined defence, which he was very capable of doing. Many sensible people thought it would be better not to send away the empress and the King of Rome, for their departure would be looked on as an abandonment of the capital, which would offend and alarm the Parisians, and would seem to prepare a void that would quickly be filled by the Bourbons. M. de Talleyrand, who clearly saw the reign of these princes approaching, and had received many secret assurances of their kindly feeling towards himself, and though he neither liked them nor felt any confidence in their abilities, still he was revolving in his mind the means of recovering under their dynasty the influence he had lost with Napoleon; but as he did not wish to compromise himself too soon or irrevocably with the latter, he seconded Joseph and the empress with great apparent zeal, giving them what he believed to be the best advice. In his opinion, to send away the empress from Paris would be most imprudently to give up the place to the Bourbons, who would have in their favour the prestige of twenty-four years of misfortune, and the still greater prestige of the peace they would be instrumental in procuring France. Joseph, not wishing to take anything on himself in such a matter, had earnestly begged Napoleon to express his wishes positively on the subject. As to the empress, she had neither opinion nor will, and in concert with Cambacères, who, as we have seen, was become very pious, she ordered prayers to be said, which in the Catholic Liturgy are called the forty hours.

Napoleon, whom all the adversities of the war had not been able to shake, exhibited strong marks of impatience on receiving the courier from Paris, who brought him several times a day sad accounts of the uneasiness manifested by the members of his government. "You are afraid," he said to those to whom he had entrusted the administration, "and you infect those about you with the same fears. The position of affairs is

serious, *but the danger does not lie where you think.* You do well to pray, but you pray like terrified people, and if I followed your example, my soldiers would believe themselves lost. Throw up round Paris the works I have ordered; arm and clothe my conscripts, make them practice target-shooting, send them to me as fast as they shall have acquired the primary notions of a soldier's duties, seize the fugitives, and draft them into the regiments, collect provisions and arms, keep yourselves cool, and do not change your opinion with every new idea thrown off in the heat of public excitement, keep my directions always before your eyes, obey them, and *leave the rest to me.* I know that some Cossacks have appeared near Sens, that Macdonald has allowed himself to be driven back on the Marne; but keep yourselves quiet, the enemy shall pay dearly for their mad temerity. Once more I say, keep yourselves quiet; do not listen to every one that offers advice, do not talk with the first comer, exert yourselves, keep your mind to yourself, and *leave the rest to me.*"

Such were the wise and energetic counsels that Napoleon addressed to Cambacérès, to the war minister, and to his brother Joseph. As to the empress, he only gave her an account of his health, some succinct and tranquillising details touching the army, all expressed in an affectionate and firm tone; but his resolution was taken as to what he should do with her and the King of Rome if the enemy appeared before Paris. He wished that the capital should be defended, for he knew very well that were it left open to the enemy, a government would be immediately established there, over which he would have no control; but though determined to dispute energetically the possession of the capital with the enemy, he had no intention of leaving his wife and son there. By keeping them in his possession he believed that he kept a bond with Austria that human respect would preserve intact. If, on the contrary, these precious pledges escaped from his hands, he said within himself that the allies would not fail to seize upon Marie Louise, and take advantage of her weakness to compose a regency that would exclude him from the throne, or the Austrians might bring her and the King of Rome to Vienna, and lavish every care on them, as people do to a virtuous girl who has had the misfortune to make a bad marriage. They would treat him as an adventurer who was not worthy of the wife they had given him, and he would perhaps be banished to some distant prison; and his son would be brought up at Vienna as an Austrian prince.

This prospective, as it rose before his mental vision, shook him to the very depths of his soul, and made him forget another not less alarming prospect, that of Paris left vacant before the

Bourbons, who were approaching. He was undoubtedly right, for it was true that his son and his wife would be taken from him, that his son would be educated as a foreign prince, and that his wife would be given to another husband; but it was not the less true that were Paris deserted, his enemies would take advantage of the circumstance to establish the Bourbons there. It was not such or such an evil that was to be apprehended; it was a conjunction of every species of evil which, in punishment of his faults, was by the decree of Providence about to descend on his devoted head.

His mind ever occupied with the danger of allowing his wife and son to fall into the hands of the Austrians, Napoleon ordered Joseph, in a letter dated the 8th February, to carry out his intentions as he had expressed them at parting, to leave Louis at Paris with extended authority, to remain there himself if necessary, to defend the capital to the last extremity; but to send up the Loire the empress and the King of Rome, with the princesses, the ministers, the grand dignitaries, the treasure of the crown, and not to give credence to secret enemies, such as M. de Talleyrand, with whom he had temporised too long; in short, to follow his instructions, and not any others. "The fate of Astyanax," he added, "prisoner to the Greeks, has always appeared to me the most unhappy of all human destinies. I would rather see my son's throat cut, and his body flung into the Seine, than to see him in the hands of the Austrians to be led to Vienna."

Napoleon afterwards pointed out in what manner Paris was to be defended. As no defence in masonry had been erected, for fear of alarming the inhabitants, he contented himself with ordering palisades and artillery to be got ready. Now that the alarm was at the height, and that there was nothing left to conceal, he ordered the enclosure called "*l'octroi*" to be strengthened with palisades, and together with the palisades he ordered *tambours* to be constructed before the gates, and redoubts to be erected on the sites already indicated; these were to be protected by artillery, and behind these improvised works the national guards were to be placed, armed with fowling-pieces, should there be a deficiency of muskets. What confidence would he not have felt, what liberty of action would he not have acquired, had he those magnificent walls which, thanks to a patriot king, now enclose the capital of France.

Napoleon had sojourned from the 3rd to the 8th February, first at Troyes, then at Nogent, foreseeing the commission of a fault by the enemy, from which he expected his safety. He soon thought he saw the first symptoms of what he expected. In fact, the morrow of the battle of Rothière, the allies had

held at Brienne a grand council, to consider what advantage they could draw from Napoleon's position, which seemed to them desperate. It was not to a force of 30,000 men they had supposed him reduced after the battle of Rothière, but from 40,000 to 50,000, amounting with those of Mortier to perhaps 70,000, and with these numbers, so far above the reality, they thought him lost, provided, as they said, they did not commit any gross faults. After many discussions, the following plan of operations was resolved on.

Whatever might be the numerical superiority the allies possessed over Napoleon, they always feared to encounter him face to face, and risk the fate of the war on a decisive battle. They wished to manœuvre and force him back on Paris, bringing up successively all the allied armies to overwhelm him beneath a crushing mass of enemies, as they had done at Leipsic. There were on the right of the allies forces left to blockade the fortresses. There were, as we have said, the d'York corps left before Metz, the Langeron before Mayence, that of Kleist before Erfurth. These corps, replaced by others, and ready to advance to the Marne, comprised that of d'York, which numbered 18,000 men; that of Langeron, 8000 (only the half of this corps was disposable); that of Kleist, 10,000—that is to say, about 36,000 men, without reckoning St. Priest's corps, and divers detachments of Bernadotte's, which were all at this moment falling back towards Belgium. It was not possible to leave the corps of d'York, Langeron, and Kleist isolated on the Marne, within range of Napoleon, instead of directing their services to the common object. It was agreed that Blücher should join these with more than 20,000 men still under his command, which would raise to about 60,000 the ancient army of Silesia, and give it an independent position. Blücher was to manœuvre at the head of this army on the Marne, and driving back Macdonald on Chalons, Meaux, and Paris, he would find himself in the rear of Napoleon, who would be consequently obliged to fall back. Then Prince Schwarzenberg, who would have at least 130,000 men after the departure of Blücher, should follow Napoleon step by step in his retreat. If Napoleon turned on Prince Schwarzenberg, Blücher would take advantage of the movement to make a fresh step forward, and thus advancing, the one along the Seine, the other along the Marne, they would finish as these rivers did, by meeting at Paris, where they would overwhelm Napoleon under the mass of the European armies assembled round the capital of France. In the meanwhile they were so strong, even apart, that if Napoleon wished to fall on one of the two allied armies, either was sufficiently strong to make head against him. Blücher, with 60,000 men, thought he had nothing to fear. Prince Schwarzenberg,



much less presumptuous, thought he could resist him with 130,000 men. Besides, at the distance they then were from Paris, the Seine and the Marne were sufficiently close to allow them to help one another, particularly as they had a large number of cavalry. It was agreed, in fact, that Prince Wittgenstein should take up a position on the Aube, where he would form a line of connection by means of the 6000 Cossacks of General Sesliavin, on one side with Blücher, who was to march along the Marne, and on the other with Prince Schwarzenberg, who was to march along the Seine. With such precautions they did not apprehend any misfortune, nor especially any of the accidents which might be expected when they had to do with the inventive genius of Napoleon. The allies were perfectly contented with the apparent advantages of their position, and Blücher, who saw in the adopted combination his own independence, with the chance of arriving first at Paris, willingly consented to the arrangement, as did Schwarzenberg, who expected to gain thereby a deliverance from the most troublesome and the most imperious of his collaborators.

In consequence of these arrangements Blücher advanced on the 3rd from Rosnay to St. Ouen, on the 4th from St. Ouen to Fère-Champenoise, and finding d'York's corps already engaged with Marshal Macdonald near Chalons, he made every effort to get in advance of the marshal, and by this means force him to retire on Eprenay and Chateau-Thierry. Macdonald, after his long retreat from Cologne to Chalons, had only 5000 foot and 2000 horse. He was at Chateau-Thierry the 8th February, followed by d'York's corps, along the Marne, and threatened in flank by Blücher, who, following the route of Fère-Champenoise and of Montmirail, hoped to get in advance of him at Meaux. Paris was thus left exposed to the enemy, and it was this evident danger that threw the inhabitants into the most intense alarm. Prince Schwarzenberg, on his side, after having carefully felt his way before Napoleon, whose slightest movement he feared, was advancing slowly on Troyes, having with his formidable adversary rearguard engagements that were becoming every day more sharp. Suddenly he conceived doubts and uneasiness. He had just learned that French troops had appeared at a distance on his left, that is to say, on the Yonne, at Sens, at Joigny, and at Auxerre—they were the troops of Pajol. Rumours had also reached him from more distant points. He had learned that a French army was being formed at Lyon under Marshal Augereau, that this army had assumed the offensive against Bubna, that the troops from Spain were seen coming en poste, that the heads of the columns were already near Orleans. He immediately asked himself whether Napoleon did not meditate some movement on his left flank





beyond the Seine and the Yonne, and whether the Lyon army, the troops that were seen on the Yonne, and those that were coming from Spain, were not troops prepared for this dangerous movement. A prey to anxiety, he advanced a little towards the left, whilst Blucher advanced a little to the right, a movement that sensibly increased the space that separated them. Lastly, Prince Schwarzenberg brought Wittgenstein from the right bank of the Aube to the left, that is to say, from Arcis to Troyes; he left de Wrède before Troyes, with a reserve in the rear, he sent Giulay to Villeneuve-l'Archeveque, and Colloredo to Sens, flattering himself that by these precautions he protected his left flank. Some Cossacks had been left with the object of forming a connection between the two armies, but the intervening space was now much increased. This experienced general, thinking that he was defending himself from one danger, was exposing himself, as we shall soon see, to another much more serious, for in war it is not one danger we must keep in view, but every; it is not one side of our position, it is the entire we ought to embrace with a wide-seeing, prompt, and steady glance.

On the 6th and 7th February, Napoleon on the watch, like a tiger ready to spring upon his prey, kept an eye on his opponents with an ever-increasing joy, the last he was destined to experience. He had long hesitated between two courses. One moment he wished to throw himself on Colloredo and Giulay, who had imprudently ventured between the Seine and the Yonne, then he thought of advancing along the Marne and attacking Blucher; but on the 7th he hesitated no longer. The importance of the results to be obtained by placing himself between Schwarzenberg and Blucher, and the necessity of aiding Macdonald and Paris as quickly as possible, decided him to advance along the Marne, and he commenced his movement against Blucher with unspeakable satisfaction. He had by extraordinary exertion, from the 4th to the 7th of February, obtained some battalions from the dépôts in Paris. He had with these resources somewhat recruited Marmont and Victor's corps as well as the divisions of Generals Gerard and Hamelinaye, and by the aid of detachments arrived from Versailles he had somewhat reinforced his cavalry. Lastly, he ordered the first division that had arrived from Spain to march on Provins. On the 5th he had ordered Marmont to advance from Arcis on Nogent, and had repaired thither himself from Troyes, covering his movements with strong rearguards in order to hide his march from the enemy. Arrived at Nogent, he commenced to execute his design. Marmont, whose mind was active enough, had also conceived this same design, but in a confused manner, for he already regarded the execution as

impossible, when Napoleon, without troubling himself about what was passing in his giddy head, ordered him on the 7th to set out from Nogent with a rearguard of cavalry and infantry, and to advance on Sézanne, a place provided by the emperor's orders with abundant resources. As soon as Marmont should have seen his way clearly, he was to be followed by his entire corps. On the 8th, Napoleon despatched Ney with a division of the young guard and the cavalry of Lefebvre-Desnoettes along this same route of Sézanne. He prepared to set out himself on the 8th with Mortier and the old guard. These three corps amounted to about 30,000 men.

However, whilst the troops were advancing along the Marne, Paris ought not to be left undefended on the Seine side. Napoleon left on the Seine Marshal Victor with the 2nd corps; the Generals Gerard and Hamelinaye with their divisions of reserve; and behind them at Provins Marshal Oudinot with the division of the young Rothenbourg guard and troops drawn from the army of Spain. Victor was charged to defend the Seine from Nogent to Bray, and Oudinot was to come to his assistance at the first sound of his cannon. Pajol, with the battalions that had arrived from Bordeaux, with the national guards and his cavalry, were to keep watch over Montereau and the bridges of the Yonne as far as Auxerre. Lastly, the two divisions of the young guard, whose organisation was now completed at Paris, had orders to take up a position between Provins and Fontainebleau. The total of these troops did not amount to less than 50,000 men, and those drawn up behind the Seine in the bend which this river forms from Nogent to Fontainebleau would give Napoleon time to return and do against Schwarzenberg what he should have accomplished against Blucher. These plans were at the least as plausible as those of the adverse generals. It remains to be seen which corresponded best with the distances, time, and actual circumstances of the war. Napoleon set out on the 9th with his old guard to pass from the Seine to the Marne, ordering that his absence should be kept a profound secret. Full of hope, he wrote a few words to M. de Caulaincourt to raise his courage, and to induce him to use less freely the *carte blanche* that he had given him, without, however, lessening his powers. In fact, if the emperor succeeded, the conditions of the peace would be very different. Consequently, in setting off on this expedition, he carried with him the fortunes of France and his own!

Whilst the emperor was marching towards Nogent our unfortunate plenipotentiary suffered at Chatillon the greatest vexations that an honest man and a good citizen can experience, and was, at the same time, subjected to the most humiliating treatment.

The diplomatists of the coalition had arrived at Chatillon on the 3rd and 4th of February. They did not delay to visit M. de Caulaincourt, testifying the highest respect, which, they wished to be understood, was accorded to his personal character. It was agreed that the five should show their credentials, and that the negotiations should commence within a few days. Meanwhile M. de Caulaincourt endeavoured, at the dinners and soirées where they met, to obtain some information, but though polite, he found the members of the congress impenetrable. The only one amongst them to whom he could have opened his mind, in virtue of the secret communications of M. de Metternich, was M. de Stadion, the Austrian minister; but he was a personal enemy of Francis; the malevolent representative of a friendly court. Next to him, there was M. de Floret, lower in rank, but more friendly; but he spoke little, sighed often, and let it be understood that the battle of Rothière was a great error, for it deeply affected the position of affairs. As to the conditions of peace, though they could not be much longer concealed from us, M. de Floret said no more on the subject than the others. M. de Rasoumoffski, formerly the interpreter of Russian passions at Vienna, was almost impertinent about everything that did not personally touch M. de Caulaincourt. M. de Humboldt made no manifestation of his sentiments, still it was easy to see the Prussian in him, but, it must be admitted, in a mollified form. The most friendly of all the ministers were the English, especially Lord Aberdeen, a perfect model of the representative of a free State, by the simplicity of his manners and the mild gravity of his demeanour. Lord Castlereagh, who was not to take any part in the conferences, but was come to direct them, like a master who gives orders without making his appearance, had astonished M. de Caulaincourt by his pacific assurances and protestations of sincerity. He insisted so strongly and frequently on the fixed resolution of treating with Napoleon, that it was impossible to avoid perceiving the general policy of the English, which professes to make war for interests purely national, and not in support of any dynasty. And so Lord Castlereagh incessantly repeated that the plenipotentiaries could come to terms immediately, and if they wished, an interview of one hour would be sufficient for the purpose. But on what bases were they to come to terms? On this point not one would consent to anticipate by a single day the solemn declaration of the conditions of peace. "They must be very harsh," thought M. de Caulaincourt, "since they dare not produce them, and they no doubt wish to promulgate them as an European law, to which no contradiction is to be offered." Every time the French plenipotentiary endeavoured to gain any confidential information from a plenipotentiary, if,

by a chance that seldom occurred, he found himself alone with one, the latter broke off the conversation. If, in the society of several, he addressed one, the person addressed raised his voice, that no one might suspect him of having any secret intelligence with France. It was evident that all feared this ideal and formidable being called "the coalition," and that none would at any price offend it. To say to the representative of France or hear from him anything that was not common to all, would have appeared an infidelity of which no person would dare to render himself guilty. Lord Castlereagh alone acting like a man who was above all suspicion, saw and heard a few words in private from M. de Caulaincourt in their various interviews, but it was only to repeat this fastidious declaration that the allies wished for peace, that it might be concluded in an hour, if the plenipotentiaries could only agree. Agree on what? Here was the everlasting question, to which no reply was given.

M. de Caulaincourt waited thus four mortal days without obtaining any explanation; he spent his time divining what was not expressed, and the result was repeated solicitations to the emperor for fresh instructions. On the 5th February the plenipotentiaries produced their credentials, declaring that the representatives of the four principal powers, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England, would negotiate for the different courts of Europe, great and small, with which France was at war. This was a convenient mode of proceeding, but one that revealed the common yoke that weighed so heavily on all the members of the coalition. The representative of England announced, at the same time, that the question of maritime rights was not to be made a subject of negotiation, as it was a question that Great Britain would not submit to the discussion of any one, not even of her allies, because it was a question that did not depend on the fleeting resolution of man. The British representative would have willingly added that it was a dogma about which no compromise could be made.

We were not in a position to offer any opposition, for we had at that moment things more important than maritime rights to defend. However, M. de Caulaincourt, for the honour of truth, made some observations, which were listened to in glacial silence, and obtained no reply. M. de Caulaincourt did not insist, and other business was proceeded with. It was agreed that during the sitting of this congress every proposition should be made in writing, and replied to in the same manner, and if these propositions suggested any verbal observations, a protocol, kept with the greatest exactness, should conserve these observations. This was a new precaution to prevent distrust among the allies. M. de Caulaincourt, offering no opposition to these formalities, begged that the pleni-

potentiaries would proceed to essentials, and declare the conditions of peace. But they would not, either that day or the following, 'open this grave subject, under pretext that they were not yet ready. At length, on the 7th, after causing M. de Caulaincourt these long delays, one of the plenipotentiaries, acting in the name of all, read in a solemn and peremptory tone, the following declaration.

France was, as a first and most important condition, to retire within the limits of 1790, and never pretend to any authority over territories situate beyond these limits; and moreover, she was not to interfere in the allotment that should be made of these countries, so that not only would she be deprived of Holland, Westphalia, and Italy, which was natural enough, but she should forego her privilege as a first-rate power to give an opinion on what was to become of these vast countries; and the allies wished to act in this manner touching the kingdoms beyond the Rhine and the Alps, as well as for those that were on this side, so that in giving up Belgium and the Rhenish provinces, she was not to be consulted on what was to be done with them. Lastly, the French plenipotentiary was required to say "yes" or "no" before the negotiations were carried further. Never had a conquered nation been treated with such insolence, and conquered we were not yet, for at Brienne we had been conquerors, at Rothière 32,000 French had during an entire day kept in check 170,000 of the enemy, and the enemy had not been able to surround these 32,000 French, nor overwhelm them, nor cut off their retreat.

All present were so impressed with the enormity of these propositions that no person seemed willing to make a comment on them—those most hostile to France fearing to weaken them by any commentary; the more moderate not wishing to undertake the task of justifying them. A profound silence succeeded this communication. M. de Caulaincourt, who could with difficulty control his emotion, declared that he had many observations to make, and demanded a hearing. After some hesitation the sitting was adjourned to the evening of the same day, in order to hear M. de Caulaincourt.

Observations on this extraordinary communication came thronging to his mind. In the first place, how could these propositions be reconciled with those of Frankfort, propositions that could not be denied, since to the recognised conversation of M. de St. Aignan there had been added a written note which recapitulated them; since M. de Metternich, on receipt of M. de Bassano's evasive reply, had insisted on obtaining an explicit acceptance of the propositions! This acceptance having been sent, the authors of the Frankfort propositions were bound by their own act, and how was it possible that



they could now make propositions so diametrically opposite? And still further, in considering these things with reference to the balance of power in Europe, how could the allies, after having declared, when they set foot on the soil of France, that they did not seek to contest her justly acquired greatness—how could they think of restricting her to the frontiers of the time of Louis XV., when since that period three of the continental powers had dismembered Poland, when since 1790 all the continental powers had made considerable acquisitions, which completely changed the proportions of the different States? If, in order to secure the peace of Europe, there had been a general return to the limits of 1790, was it not just that each State should restore what it had since acquired—that Austria should not think of retaining Venice; that Prussia and Austria should not keep what they had filched from the small German States, and especially from the ecclesiastical princes; that Prussia, Austria, and Russia should restore the portions of Poland they had possessed themselves of at the last partition? Was it not, in fact, just that England should restore the Ionian Isles, Malta, the Cape, the Mauritius, &c., &c.? To make France alone shrink back within her ancient limits would be to destroy in Europe, to the general detriment, the necessary balance of power, and if, as experience has since proved, France might remain great, and very great, even after the loss of some provinces, she would owe it to the energy and intellectual power of her people, that is to say, to her moral grandeur, of which her enemies could not deprive her, though they might of her material greatness! Certainly there was nothing which conquerors might not assume the right to do, and this argument would cut short all discussion, but in such a case it would have been better not to utter these insidious words, of which the enemy made use on crossing the Rhine, and to avow that force and not justice was to serve as a rule of conduct to the allied powers. France would, in that case, have known what she had to expect from her invaders. But this was not all. How could the allies demand immense sacrifices *en bloc* without entering into details, without determining the more or the less which was an important point in the case; for in the Low Countries, in the Rhenish provinces, along the Swiss and Alpine frontiers, there remained many questions that, according to the sense in which they were solved, would afford various results? And these portions of territory about to be given up, was it possible to abandon them without knowing to whom they would be ceded? To give them up, for example, to a great or a little power, to yield a territory on the left of the Rhine to a little State like Hesse, or to a large State like Prussia, would constitute an important difference. To refuse

an explanation on any of these points was an unjustifiable proceeding, scarcely permissible with an enemy on whose throat the adversary's foot was already planted, and France, if unfortunately she was one day to find herself at the feet of her enemies, was not yet in that position. And if her representative submitted to all or part of these sacrifices, it could only be from a desire to put an immediate termination to a cruel war, to avoid a battle whose result would be perhaps decisive of the safety or total defeat of France; in short, to save Paris; but would it be possible to make these mournful sacrifices unless M. de Caulaincourt was first assured that the moment he gave his consent the allies would instantly desist from their adverse proceedings?

These considerations, so natural, so indisputable, M. de Caulaincourt essayed to unfold on the evening of the 7th, and did so under a feeling of bridled indignation. He was a soldier, and he would have preferred to die fighting side by side with the last soldier of France against these insulting enemies than vainly wrestle in a negotiation with men who would neither listen nor reply to him. But he was willing to suffer everything to profit of an opportunity of making peace, if it occurred, and with the greatest calmness of manner, through which, however, his vexation of spirit was perceptible, he referred to the Frankfort propositions, which had been formally proposed and formally accepted; he objected to the acquisitions that the different powers had already made or intended to make in Poland, in Germany, in Italy, and above all, on the seas; he wished to know especially what was to become of the provinces of which France was to be deprived, and lastly, what would be the recompense of the sacrifices to which France might consent; whether, for example, a suspension of hostilities would be the immediate consequence?

The first observations, those that referred to the Frankfort propositions, visibly embarrassed the ministers of the allied powers. In fact, no reply could be made, and if nations acknowledged any other umpire than force, the negotiators would be instantly condemned. M. de Rasoumoffski, the haughty Russian that represented the Emperor Alexander, replied that he did not know what was meant. M. de Stadion, who represented the Austrian cabinet, and was the principal and direct author of the Frankfort propositions, asserted that they were not mentioned in his instructions. But Lord Aberdeen, the most sincere and upright person present, who had witnessed the overtures made to M. de St. Aignan, who had discussed the terms of the Frankfort note, how could he deny these facts? So he limited himself to stammering forth some words that proved his embarrassment as an honest man, and then all these

diplomatists, opposing to the reasoning of the French minister a sort of general clamour, exclaimed with one voice that these questions were not under discussion; that the Frankfort propositions were not the subject before them, but those of Chatillon; that it was upon these, and not upon the others, they were called to pronounce in the present sitting; that they were commissioned not to discuss but to present them, and to learn whether they would be accepted or rejected; and in a very decided manner they let it be understood that it was to be either peace or war, war to the death which should follow; that an immediate decision should be come to by replying on the spot either "yes" or "no." M. de Caulaincourt seeing there were no means of forcing an explanation from men who wanted a yes or no, demanded an adjournment of the conference, which was accepted, and then the assembly broke up.

M. de Caulaincourt was alternately plunged in grief or excited by indignation, for in the propositions that the plenipotentiaries had dared to present to him the form was as insulting as the substance was disheartening. Certes, Napoleon had abused the rights of a victor, but never to this degree. He had often required a great deal from his enemies, but he had never humiliated them; and when on the morrow of the battle of Austerlitz, Alexander, who was on the point of being taken prisoner with his army, begged forbearance in a note written with pencil, Napoleon replied with a courtesy in which he was not now imitated. In any case, Napoleon was not France, the faults of the one were not the faults of the other, and people who laid such stress on regarding Napoleon as distinct from France ought not to have made the latter suffer for the faults of the former. However this may be, M. de Caulaincourt saw very clearly that to stop the onward march of the allies he would be obliged to pronounce these terrible words of a pure and simple acceptance of the proposed terms; but to bar the entrance of the enemy into Paris he was ready to use the unlimited powers with which he was furnished. This excellent citizen, devoted to France and the imperial dynasty, committed now the error (perhaps the first with which he could be charged) of thinking more of Napoleon's throne than of his glory. He totally forgot that it would be more glorious for Napoleon to perish than to cede the natural frontiers; that the question involved his honour as well as the true greatness of France, and that however unfortunate she might afterwards become, no greater sacrifice could be demanded of her than that actually required; that even under the Bourbons she would be allowed the frontiers of 1790, and that consequently, for Napoleon as for France, it would have been as well to risk everything; and the noble-minded M. de Caulaincourt, who had been so often

in the right when his master was in the wrong, happened on this occasion not to perceive so clearly as the emperor the true position of things. He was therefore ready to yield, one condition always understood—an assurance that the enemy would immediately cease hostilities. But to yield everything demanded, without a certainty of saving Paris and the imperial throne, was in his eyes an afflicting humiliation, without any compensation. In his despair he had recourse to the only one amongst the plenipotentiaries in whom the feelings of a man were discernible beneath the frigid reserve of the diplomatist; he tried to learn from him whether the terrible sacrifice demanded by the allies would at least procure a suspension of hostilities. Lord Aberdeen, to whom he applied, taking all possible care, according to agreement, to avoid any private communication with the French representative, gave him to understand, however, that a suspension of hostilities could only be obtained by an immediate and unreserved acceptance of the proposed terms, and that hostilities should cease only on the ratification of the acceptance of these terms. This was almost asking an unconditional surrender, and that, too, without being sure of life being spared, because in the interval between the acceptance and ratification a decisive battle might take place, and the fate of France be decided by arms. It was therefore not worth while to have recourse to political precautions, since they would form no defence against the intervention of force. Thus though M. de Caulaincourt had a *carte blanche*, he dared not give a formal consent to the acceptance that the allies wished to force from him, and he wrote to headquarters to communicate his anxieties to Napoleon; but the very next day he received from the Russian plenipotentiary the extraordinary declaration that the sittings of the congress were suspended. The Emperor Alexander, it was said, wished to have some fresh communications with his allies before any further conferences were held. This last intelligence threw M. de Caulaincourt completely into despair. He fancied he now saw the downfall of Napoleon irrevocably determined, and in his profound grief he wrote to M. de Metternich in the strictest confidence, to ask whether in case he made use of his powers and accepted the imposed conditions, he would obtain a suspension of hostilities. This was perhaps making too open an exhibition of his despair; this despair, it was true, was that of an honest man and an excellent citizen, and the avowal was made to the only one amongst the diplomatists who was not anxious to abuse the privileges of victory; but there are positions in which men must hide beneath a stern exterior the noblest sentiments of their souls. M. de Caulaincourt had nothing more to do than await a reply from M. de Metternich on one side, from Napoleon on the other.

In the state in which things then were, it was only the cannon placed between the Seine and the Marne, and the silence at Chatillon, which could operate any change in this horrible position of affairs. Napoleon was en marche, and in setting out he had sent word to M. de Caulaincourt not to be in a hurry. He was on the eve of playing his last stake, and he did it with the confidence of an experienced gambler who does not doubt the success of his last calculations.

We have seen in the preceding pages the position of the armies when Blucher quitted Prince Schwarzenberg, whilst Napoleon, keeping an eye upon him, was lying in wait at Nogent-sur-Seine. The Prussian general d'York descended the Marne in pursuit of Marshal Macdonald, who, threatened in the rear by d'York and on the flank by Blucher, had no other resource than to retire rapidly on Meaux. Blucher, marching at equal distance from the Marne and the Aube, through Fère-Champenoise and Montmirail, had sent Sacken forward, and followed with Olsouvieff, Kleist, and Langeron. On the 9th February, Macdonald had retired to Meaux, the position of the enemy being as follows: General d'York with 18,000 men was at Chateau-Thierry on the Marne; Sacken with 20,000 Russians was on the Montmirail road; Olsouvieff with 6000 Russians at Champaubert; and lastly, in the rear, at Etoges, Blucher with 10,000 men of Kleist and 8000 of Capzewitz, these latter constituting the remains of Langeron. Here were at least 60,000 men dispersed between Chatillon and Ferté-sous-Jouarre, a part on the Marne, and part on the road that separates the Aube from the Marne. If Napoleon, whose clear-visioned glance had foreseen this state of things, could only fall opportunely on forces so dispersed, he might obtain the most unforeseen and important results.

By a most fortunate chance—fortune's last favour—Champaubert, through which Napoleon was to reach the Montmirail road, was only guarded by 6000 of Olsouvieff's Russians. He found the point nearly unprotected by which he could advance into the midst of his enemies, and found himself in a position to say that he had hit Achilles in the heel. On the 7th February he ordered Marmont to advance with a portion of his cavalry and his infantry, and march from Nogent on Sézanne, informing him that he was about to follow in person. On the 8th he sent forward in the same direction a division of the young guard and a part of the cavalry of the guard under Marshal Ney. On the 9th he set out himself with the old guard under Mortier, and passed the night at Sézanne. The way from Nogent to Champaubert was a cross-road, badly kept, as at that time all the second-rate roads in France were, and beyond Sézanne it was almost impracticable for heavy waggons.

At two leagues from Sézanne, at Saint-Prix, we find the extremity of the Saint-Gond marshes, and in the midst of these marshes we see the little river called Petit-Morin, which runs at the foot of the high grounds, crossed by the chaussée that passes from Montmirail to Meaux. The artillery found great difficulty on the 9th in reaching Sézanne. They, moreover, met Marshal Marmont, who had at first exulted in the idea of throwing himself into the midst of Blucher's scattered corps, and who, after having advanced on the 7th as far as Chaptou, had suddenly turned back, declaring the marshes of Saint-Gond impassable, the high grounds covered with enemies, the plan a failure, &c., &c. Napoleon troubled himself little about the marshal's change of opinion,\* and ordered the troops to march

\* We think it our duty to enter here into some details on a historical question, suggested by Marshal Marmont's Memoirs, relative to the affairs of Champaubert, Montmirail, Vauchamps, &c. This marshal, whose intellect was more brilliant than solid, died with the conviction on his mind that he was the author of the brilliant tactics displayed at Montmirail, tactics that procured Napoleon, on the eve of his downfall, five or six of the most glorious days of his existence. We shall see on what the marshal founded his opinion, and on what grounds he relates the circumstance in his Memoirs. He had been staying at Arcis-sur-Aube and at Nogent-sur-Seine from the 2nd to the 6th February, and whilst in these places he perceived the movement of Blucher, and with natural instinct he wrote to Napoleon, proposing to attack the Prussian general. On the 7th he received orders to advance on Sézanne, and even with less *amour-propre* than he possessed he might have believed himself the instigator of this brilliant manœuvre. This is what he relates in his Memoirs, quoting his own letters and those he has had in reply, and in these details he is perfectly correct. But he does not add two circumstances, one of which he was ignorant of, and the other he had perhaps forgotten, but both of which totally alter the aspect of the case. In the first place, it was not until the 6th that he wrote to Napoleon, whilst the emperor had on the 2nd announced his project to the war minister, a project that was at the same time his last remaining hope, and depended on an error of the enemy which Napoleon, with his eagle glance, foresaw before it was committed. From the 2nd to the 6th he had arranged everything according to his own views, without saying anything on the subject to Marshal Marmont, who, knowing nothing of what Napoleon was thinking and writing, believed himself the sole author of the projected combination. Besides, Marshal Marmont does not relate how, having arrived at Chaptou, he lost courage, fancied the movement impossible, turned back, and on the 9th wrote Napoleon a letter of four pages, advising him to abandon the project of which, during his remaining life, he believed himself the author. Napoleon, as we have seen, laid little stress on what had alarmed Marmont, because he viewed things as a whole, certain that if there were some thousand men at Champaubert, it was not possible that Blucher's 60,000, of whom he had received intelligence at the same time from Vertus, Etoges, Montmirail, and Chateau-Thierry, could be all at Champaubert; he therefore advanced, convinced that he would reach his destination, and urged besides by the powerful motive that in his situation it was necessary to risk everything for the success of this grand movement. We shall now see who was right, he or his lieutenant, and who was really the author of the admirable operation in question. We have already furnished many proofs of the difficulty of arriving at historical truth, and the fact we are now discussing is a fresh example. Yet Marshal Marmont was an intelligent man, an eye-witness, and in a position to say "I was there." This is why Napoleon in one of his letters says with as much wit as penetration, that his officers knew what he did on the field of battle as correctly as the strollers in the

en masse on the little village of Saint-Prix, crossed by the Petit-Morin, and to surmount at any cost the local difficulties. He had received reports from various quarters which proved that there were Russians at Montmirail, that there were some in the rear at Etoges, and that there were Prussians on the Marne. Knowing with what enemies he had to do, he was convinced that they would not march so as to present on every side an impenetrable mass. Having, with Marmont, Ney, and Mortier, 30,000 of his best troops, he was certain that by choosing judiciously the point of attack, and bringing all his forces to bear upon it, he would soon find himself in the midst of the enemy. But there was one dangerous step to make, it was to cross the marshy lands that lie between Sézanne and Saint-Prix. The local authorities, when called on, promised to assemble all the horses of the country. The peasants, animated by the best sentiments, and above all, exasperated by the presence of the enemy, thronged in crowds, and at ten in the morning were ready between Sézanne and the Petit-Morin to aid with their hands and horses.

On the 10th of February, at the break of day, the troops set forward. Marmont marched at the head with the cavalry of the 1st corps and the Ricard and Lagrange divisions, comprising the 6th infantry corps. In approaching the Petit-Morin, the marshy surface yielded considerably; but the peasants, by the aid of hands and horses, extricated the cannon, and all arrived safely at the bridge of Saint-Prix. Some of Olsouvieff's sharpshooters were posted along the borders of the Petit-Morin; the French dispersed them and crossed the bridge. The cavalry of the 1st corps advanced in full trot. Having passed the Petit-Morin, they entered a valley at the bottom of which lies the village of Baye. On ascending the opposite side of this valley we find a kind of plateau, in the midst of which stands Champaubert. Olsouvieff, provided with abundant artillery, had placed on the border of the plateau twenty-four pieces of cannon, that commanded the valley through which the French were making their way. The cavalry of the 1st corps dashed forward, spite of Olsouvieff's cannonade, rushed on the village of Baye, followed by Ricard's cavalry. Horse and foot entered the village *pêle-mêle*, and ascended the heights close in the rear of the Russians. There was, a little to the left, another village, called Bannai, and here the Russians were posted in great strength. The

*Tuilleries knew what he wrote in his cabinet, which implies that he alone, embracing in his glance the entirety of the operations, knew the motive of each. And for this reason it is in his orders and his correspondence that we must seek this secret, and not in the thousand recitals of eye-witnesses, which have undoubtedly a legendary value; but restricted, touching only the material fact operated before their eyes, and rarely extending to the true significance of the fact.*

guard marched thither and expelled them. The French commander could now deploy his forces on the plateau, whose surface is tolerably even, sprinkled here and there with clusters of trees; and now the Montmirail road was discernible; of this it was needful we should take possession. The road ran from our right to our left, from Chalons to Meaux, crossing the village of Champaubert that lay before us. We were nearly a league distant from this important point.

At this moment the French discovered a corps of Russian infantry about 6000 strong, accompanied by a great deal of artillery, but very little cavalry, retiring precipitately, but in tolerable order. General Olsouvieff, who commanded this corps, had just learned that Napoleon was advancing at the head of considerable forces; he perceived his danger to be extreme, and became alarmed.

Napoleon had hastened to Marmont, whose infantry was advancing, flanked by the 1st cavalry corps. The important point was to reach the Montmirail road as soon as possible, and expel the enemy, who occupied it. In any case, the movement was of great importance, for if Blucher had already got in advance of our left in the direction of Meaux, we could cut him off from Chalons and his line of retreat; if he had remained in the rear of our right, we should cut him off from any of his lieutenants who might have got in advance of him, and we should thus advance into the midst of the army of Silesia, with an almost certainty of destroying it piecemeal. When Napoleon arrived, Marmont had just sent forward the 1st corps of infantry on the right; Napoleon despatched in the same direction General Girardin, with the two squadrons he had brought with him, to disperse some groups that were retiring along the Chalons road. The alarm of the enemy redoubled at this aspect, and they retired precipitately. Marmont, with his infantry, pushed them briskly on Champaubert, and General Doumerc, with the cuirassiers, charged them in the plain on the right. The Russians, completely routed, threw themselves in disorder into Champaubert. Marmont entered the village at the head of Ricard's infantry, with fixed bayonets, whilst the cuirassiers of Doumerc, turning to the right, cut off all communication with Chalons. Olsouvieff, driven out of Champaubert by our infantry, and flung on our left by the cuirassiers, was at the same time separated from Blucher, who had remained behind at Etoges, and thrown back on Montmirail, where there was no other resource than to take refuge with Sacken, who was at a great distance, and might already have sought shelter behind the Marne. In this embarrassment Olsouvieff had retired near a lake surrounded with trees; this place was called "the Desert." Ricard debouching direct from Cham-



paubert, and Doumerc advancing from the right to the left, fell upon him. In an instant his infantry gave way and were partly cut in pieces by the cuirassiers, partly made prisoners. Fifteen hundred killed or wounded, nearly 3000 prisoners, amongst whom were General Olsouvieff and his staff, together with twenty pieces of cannon, were the trophies of this glorious day. This was fortune's first favour since the commencement of the campaign, and it was a great one, less from the immediate result obtained than from the ulterior results that might be hoped. In fact, according to the report of prisoners interrogated by Napoleon himself, it was ascertained that Blucher was in the rear, that is to say, at Etoges; that Sacken was in front, in the direction of Montmirail; that d'York was higher up, towards the Marne; and that consequently the French were now in the midst of the army of Silesia; that in the succeeding days a great quantity of booty would be obtained, and perhaps the aspect of affairs totally changed.

And now Napoleon experienced an emotion of deep-seated joy. He had felt nothing like it for a long time. After having doubted of everything, he who during so many years had never doubted anything, Napoleon's faith in his good fortune revived, and he began to think himself nearly re-established on the pinnacle of his greatness. Supping at Champaubert in a village inn with his marshals, he spoke of the vicissitudes of fortune with that cheerful philosophy we all experience when evil days give place to good, and in a rare outburst of confidence he exclaimed—"If to-morrow I should be as fortunate as I have been to-day, within fifteen days I shall drive the enemy back upon the Rhine, and from the Rhine to the Vistula there is but a step." This was his last transport of joy, which we must not grudge him, and we would share it with him were the *dénouement* of this great drama not so well known to the present generation.

The mode of proceeding on the following day, which might have suggested some doubts to another, was quite clear to Napoleon. Fallen like a thunderbolt in the midst of the enemy's columns, he might have hesitated as to which he should first attack, that of Blucher on the right, or that of Sacken on the left. If he advanced immediately towards the right, Blucher had the means of escape by falling back on Chalons, whilst that by marching to his left he was certain of reaching Sacken, who would be caught between Champaubert and Paris, and moreover, in overwhelming Sacken, he would draw Blucher towards him, for the Prussian general would not certainly allow his lieutenants to be overpowered without hastening to their assistance. Taking in with his ordinary quickness of perception every aspect of his position, Napoleon, on the morning of the

11th, advanced without any hesitation to the left, followed the Montmirail road, and left on his right, in front of Champaubert, Marshal Marmont, with the Lagrange division and 1st cavalry, to restrain Blucher, whilst he should engage Sacken and d'York, whom he might meet apart or combined.

Napoleon arrived about ten in the morning at Montmirail, at the head of his column, amounting to nearly 24,000 men, with Ney, Mortier, the cavalry of the guard, and the Ricard division. He crossed Montmirail, and debouched on the highroad, where he took up his position opposite the Russian troops, who were hurrying forward. It was Sacken turning on us with his accustomed impetuosity. What had taken place amongst the allies is fully descriptive of the confusion and worthlessness of their counsels.

Blucher, as we have seen, had advanced along the Marne to surround Macdonald, whom the Generals d'York and Sacken were briskly pursuing, the one upon the right bank of this river, the other along the left, after which the army of Silesia, Macdonald being defeated, was to advance on Paris, the object of the ardent longings of the allies. Meanwhile Schwarzenberg was to advance towards the capital along the course of the Seine, and as we have already said, he had inclined a little towards the Yonne, and so increased the space that separated him from Blucher. Fearing that Blucher might reach Paris before him, he had begged him, at the earnest entreaty of the Emperor Alexander, to stop outside the walls of Paris, and await the allied sovereigns there. Surely such presumption and inconsistency deserved chastisement.

Blucher had received these orders at the same moment that he learned the arrival of Napoleon at Sézanne, and he did not know what to do, for impetuosity is not clearness of perception, especially when one is called on to choose between two courses equally perilous. General Gneisenau was of one opinion, General Muffling of another. They had tried to induce Sacken to come up, passing through the French columns. An order which offered no special means of safety was to fall back on Montmirail, or to take refuge behind the Marne with General d'York, should the danger be so great as was said. If, on the contrary, they had been alarmed without cause, Sacken was authorised to set out in pursuit, passing through Ferté-sous-Jouarre, towards Paris. On receiving intelligence of the sudden appearance of Napoleon, Sacken, instead of retiring behind the Marne, retraced his steps, in order to have the honour of fighting the Emperor of the French, and had invited General d'York to cross the Marne at Chateau-Thierry, and advance along the Montmirail route to witness or assist at his triumph. General d'York had only accepted this invitation in part, and had

advanced a short way towards Montmirail, but always supporting his rear on Chateau-Thierry.

Napoleon having debouched by the Montmirail route, saw Sacken, who was returning from Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and perceived at a distance on his right troops that were coming from the banks of the Marne by the Chateau-Thierry route, but who did not appear in a hurry to take part in this grave business. These were General d'York's troops. The first operation to be executed was to bar Sacken's way and get rid of him, and afterwards attack the other comer who was discernible in the direction of Chateau-Thierry. The French were still on the plateau they had ascended the previous evening in taking possession of Champaubert, and in advancing on Montmirail they had on their left the declivity of this plateau, whose foot was bathed by the Petit-Morin. About half-way down this declivity the little village of Marchais is situate. Napoleon placed Ricard's division here to oppose Sacken on this side, whilst that on the highroad he had deployed his artillery and posted his cavalry en masse. In this attitude the Ricard infantry defending at Marchais the extremity of the plateau, the cavalry and artillery intercepting the highroad, Napoleon could wait the junction of Ney and Mortier, who had remained behind.

Sacken having arrived with his 20,000 men, and seeing the highroad occupied, perceived that it would not be so easy as he had at first thought to overthrow Napoleon in order to join Blucher. He now only thought of cutting his way through the enemy. The highroad appeared to be blocked up by a compact mass of cavalry. On his right and our left, he saw along the woody declivities that slope towards Petit-Morin a possible outlet, of which he could make himself master by seizing the little village of Marchais. He directed a strong column of infantry towards this village, whilst he was endeavouring to take possession of small clusters of houses and farms also situate on the side of the highroad, and called l'Epine-aux-Bois and Haute-Epine. A brisk engagement took place at the village of Marchais between the column of infantry sent by Sacken and the Ricard division. The latter made a vigorous resistance, lost and retook the village, and finished by keeping possession, whilst the mass of our cavalry, posted on the highroad, protected our numerous artillery, and was in return protected by them.

It was now two o'clock in the afternoon. The roads were frightfully bad, and the guard had found great difficulty in traversing them. The first division of the old guard, under Friant, having at length reached the plateau, Napoleon prepared to deal the enemy a mortal blow. Sacken had strongly occupied l'Epine-aux-Bois, situate, like the village of Marchais,

on the flank of the highroad, but a little more forward in relation to us. This position seemed difficult to carry without great loss of life, but once carried, everything was decided, for the enemy's troops that had advanced on our left, between Marchais and the Petit-Morin, would inevitably be made prisoners, and Sacken had no other resource than to sacrifice them, and take refuge with the débris of his corps near General d'York, on the Marne. Napoleon, in order to render the attack on l'Epine-aux-Bois less bloody, made a feint of yielding the position near Marchais, in the intention of drawing Sacken thither, and thus inducing him to withdraw some of his troops from l'Epine-aux-Bois. At the same time he put his cavalry in movement, which had hitherto remained motionless on the highroad. These orders, given with vigorous precision, were executed in the same manner.

At a signal from Napoleon, Ricard made a feint of falling back and abandoning Marchais, whilst Nansouty advanced with the cavalry of the guard. At this sight Sacken hastened to profit of the advantage he fancied he had obtained, and with a portion of his centre quitted l'Epine-aux-Bois to seize Marchais, leaving on the highroad only a detachment, for the purpose of keeping up a communication with General d'York. Seizing the opportunity, Napoleon despatched Friant with the old guard to l'Epine-aux-Bois. These old soldiers, who combined the fire with the self-possession of tried courage, advanced without firing a shot, crossed a little ravine that separated them from l'Epine-aux-Bois, and then advanced with fixed bayonets. In the twinkling of an eye they made themselves masters of the position, and cut down all who opposed them. During the performance of this vigorous act, Nansouty, after having advanced along the highroad, turned suddenly to the left, to oppose the troops of Sacken, who had overpassed l'Epine-aux-Bois, made a desperate charge upon them, and scattered some in the direction of the Petit-Morin, and obliged the others to fall back. The latter, obliged to retreat, still fighting, left in serious danger the troops that were engaged on our left between Marchais and the Petit-Morin. Napoleon then ordered Bertrand, with two battalions of the young guard, to advance on the village of Marchais, to assist Ricard to retake the place. These battalions, rallying Ricard's infantry, entered Marchais with fixed bayonets, whilst the cavalry of the guard, under General Guyot, pursued and sabred the fugitives. In consequence of these combined movements all who had ventured between the highroad and the Petit-Morin were either made prisoners or killed, even on the flank of the plateau. In the space of a few minutes, from 4000 to 5000 prisoners were made, thirty pieces of cannon were taken, and our cavalry left between 2000 and

3000 men dead on the plain. Sacken had no other means of safety than a hasty retreat, and under favour of night, to re-pass from the left to the right of the highroad (left and right with regard to us), and rejoin General d'York, who had advanced cautiously, but whom Napoleon had held in check near the village of Fontenelle by sending thither the second division of the old guard under General Mortier.

This day—the 11th—named from Montmirail, was still more brilliant than the preceding. Out of 20,000 men, Sacken had lost 8000, either killed, wounded, or made prisoners, and this glorious triumph had cost us at the utmost only 700 or 800 men, for the old soldiers Napoleon had employed on this occasion knew how to manage, so as to inflict much injury on the enemy, without sustaining great loss themselves. The succeeding days promised still greater results, for the entire army of Blucher, taken in detail, was about to receive the chastisement due to presumption.

Everything indicated that Sacken, flying towards the Marne, was about to rejoin the Prussian general d'York near Chateau-Thierry, and that consequently it was in that direction the French ought to march. Thus the third part of the army of Silesia was now in its turn isolated, and forced in this state to confront Napoleon. The next day, in fact, the 12th of February, Napoleon set out with the second division of the old guard under Mortier, one division of the young guard under Ney, and all the cavalry, thinking these forces sufficient to overthrow an enemy already in disorder. He left behind, in the direction of Montmirail, the first division of the old guard under Friant, another of the young guard under Curial, in order, if needful, to succour Marmont, who was left in front of Blucher, and to have forces within reach of the Seine, should the necessity arise of hastening thither to stop Schwarzenberg's progress. The excellence of Napoleon's tactics consisted in only doing what was indispensable, in doing it at a proper time, quickly, and with energy.

He set out on the 12th of February, and quitted the Montmirail road, which runs parallel to the Marne, to advance in a perpendicular direction on that river. He there found General d'York with about 18,000 Prussians and 12,000 Russians—the remains of Sacken's corps—formed in column on the Chateau-Thierry route. The greater part of the enemy's infantry was massed behind a stream near the village of Caquerets. A company of the guard, acting *en tirailleurs* a little below the village, dispersed the enemy's sharpshooters, crossed the stream, and forced the Prussians to retreat. The French passed through the village and advanced into the plain; the two infantry divisions and the guard deployed. Napoleon, who had

brought up the cavalry on his right, ordered them to advance in full gallop on the flank of the enemy's infantry, and reach Chateau-Thierry before them. This order was immediately executed. At sight of this, General d'York sent his cavalry to resist ours, but General Nansouty, with the squadrons of the guards of honour and those of the guard, rushed on the Prussian cavalry, threw them back on Chateau-Thierry, sabred a part, and captured all the light artillery. Nothing could equal the ardour of our brave horsemen, whose courage was raised to the highest point by a sense of the danger that threatened France, and their devotedness to the emperor himself.

During this rapid movement, made by our cavalry in order to reach Chateau-Thierry before General d'York, we had succeeded in separating from the main body of the enemy a rearguard of three Prussian and four Russian battalions. General Letort, commanding the dragoons of the guard, anxious to surpass, if possible, all that the cavalry had performed for some days past, charged the seven battalions with five or six hundred horses, broke their lines, killed a great number, and took 3000 prisoners, with a great quantity of artillery. Infantry and cavalry then threw themselves en masse on Chalons. Prince William of Prussia had advanced with his division, to prevent us continuing the pursuit. He was in his turn overthrown, after a loss of 500 men. The French entered Chateau-Thierry *pêle-mêle* with the enemy, and made many prisoners. The inhabitants, irritated at the conduct of the Prussians, intoxicated at the same time with joy and anger, gave no quarter to d'York's soldiers, now surprised in an isolated position; they killed or led them prisoners to Napoleon. Unfortunately the enemy had destroyed the bridge of Chateau-Thierry, which stopped short our pursuit. Napoleon had still one hope. In setting out to execute this succession of movements, he had informed Marshal Macdonald what he was about to do, had ordered him to pause at Meaux, and in whatever condition his troops might be, to return by the right bank of the Marne, promising that he would find there the finest booty imaginable.

Arrived at Chateau-Thierry, Napoleon waited with confidence, employing the time in reconstructing the bridge of the Marne, and reckoning that Macdonald, who ought to appear on the other side, would capture thousands of prisoners and a vast quantity of artillery. But the day passed and Macdonald did not appear. This marshal, who was accustomed to regular warfare, in which he excelled, felt irritated against Napoleon, his generals, and his soldiers, because that he had been brought from the banks of the Rhine to the gates of Paris with 6000 men in a state of disorder; and instead of attributing these mischances to circumstances, he found fault with everybody;

and wholly occupied with the state of his troops, instead of making use of them as they were, he had employed his time in reorganising them with the resources he had received from Meaux. He consequently did not appear on the right bank of the Marne at the decisive moment that Napoleon wished to see him.

This disappointment, which somewhat curtailed the consequences of Napoleon's grand manœuvre, could not, however, prevent the great results it had already produced. He had conquered, without losing more than 1000 men, three of Blucher's corps, and there only remained one more to strike—that of Blucher himself—in order to have overthrown in detail the army of Silesia, one of the two that threatened the empire, and this, too, the most formidable, if not in number, at least in energy. He had already captured from 11,000 to 12,000 men, and killed or wounded from 6000 to 7000. Should Blucher, too, take a place amongst the conquered, Napoleon would have nothing left to desire touching the army of Silesia.

Napoleon, as indefatigable now as in the palmy days of his youth, resolved not to lose a moment in deriving from this series of operations all the advantages that he might still hope. He employed the remainder of the 12th and the greater part of the 13th in repairing the bridge of the Marne, in order to send Mortier, in the absence of Macdonald, towards Soissons in pursuit of d'York and Sacken's corps; and whilst he watched over these arrangements, he kept his eye fixed on Montmirail, where Marmont was placed in advance of Blucher to observe his movements; nor did he forget the Marshals Victor and Oudinot, who were stationed on the Seine, with orders to keep Schwarzenberg in check. On the Montmirail side Blucher had given no signs of life, and Marmont had remained at Etoges without attempting an attack. On the Seine side the situation of things was less peaceful. Prince Schwarzenberg, after having allowed his troops to repose for a short time at Troyes, marched them along the Seine, where he occupied the sweep between Méry and Montereau, and tried to force a passage at Nogent-sur-Seine, at Bray, and even at Montereau. Marshals Victor and Oudinot resisted to the utmost of their power with the resources Napoleon had left them, but earnestly requested his return. He every day gave them intelligence of his proceedings, and each succeeding day brought better news. He encouraged them to hold their ground, promising to return to their assistance as soon as he should have finished with Blucher.

Napoleon had thus passed thirty-six hours at Chateau-Thierry, when, on the night between the 13th and 14th, he received from Marmont the serious but gratifying intelligence that Blucher,

who, during the three days of the 10th, 11th, and 12th, had remained motionless, had at length resumed the offensive, and was marching on Montmirail, probably at the head of considerable forces. Napoleon immediately set out. He had, as we have seen, left at Montmirail, Friant with the strongest of the old guard, Curial with a division of the young guard, and had ordered the Leval division that was coming from Spain to advance to the same point. A cavalry division, drawn from all the dépôts, combined at Versailles, had also arrived at Montmirail. Napoleon ordered all these troops to advance from Montmirail to Champaubert to support Marshal Marmont. He sent thither from Chateau-Thierry, Musnier's infantry division of the young guard, and all the cavalry of the guard under the command of Ney. At the same time he despatched towards Soissons, Mortier with the second division of the guard, with Colbert's lancers, and the guards of honour of General Defrance, ordering him to pursue *à outrance* the conquered troops of Generals d'York and Sacken. He then set off in full gallop in order to reach the place of destination before the troops that he was bringing. He arrived about nine in the morning at Montmirail, and found everything just as he could have wished, for it seemed that in these latter days fortune could refuse him nothing that could tend to render his triumphs more glorious.

Blucher, after having waited intelligence from d'York and Sacken during the 11th and 12th, flattering himself that they had fallen back safe and sound on the Marne, had at length thought of coming to their assistance by advancing to Montmirail with the troops of Capzewitz, the Prussian corps of Kleist, and the remains of Olsouvieff's corps. These troops amounted in all to 18,000 or 20,000 men. Blucher had besides sent to Prince Schwarzenberg, begging him to send the Wittgenstein detachment across through Sézanne, confident that with this detachment, and with the troops under his command, he could effect on Napoleon's rear a diversion strong enough to free d'York and Sacken, who would thus be put in a position to remount the Marne, and join him through Epernay and Chalons. This was an irrational mode of reasoning, for in advancing in this way he might encounter Napoleon, just victorious over Olsouvieff, Sacken, and d'York, and returning with his combined forces to throw himself on the general of the army of Silesia, and conquer the chief after having conquered his lieutenants.

On the morning of the 13th, Blucher had quitted Vertus, ascended the plateau on which Champaubert and Montmirail are situate, and forced Marmont to retreat, who, having only 5000 or 6000 men to oppose to the forces of the Prussian general, had retired successively on Champaubert, Fromentières,



and Vauchamps. It was from the latter place that Marmont had, on the evening of the 13th, written to Napoleon. On the 14th, expecting the emperor's arrival, he evacuated Vauchamps, and took up a position a little in the rear, on the Montmirail route.

Napoleon having joined Marmont on the 14th, about nine in the morning, offensive operations were instantly resumed. Marshal Marmont, in abandoning Vauchamps, had taken up a position on a woody height, on whose summit he had placed his artillery. Blucher, marching with his accustomed confidence, sent the Prussian Ziethen division forward to Montmirail before him. This division had scarcely got outside Vauchamps when it was received with a terrible discharge of artillery, that caused great loss, and forced the division to return to the village. Immediately after, Marmont ordered the Ricard division to advance on Vauchamps, in order to carry this village, and under favour of the surrounding woods, try to turn the enemy, on the left by help of General Grouchy's cavalry, and on the right by Lagrange's infantry division.

Though these movements were executed with extraordinary vigour, they were opposed by great difficulties. The Ricard division having penetrated into Vauchamps, found there the Ziethen division determined to make a vigorous defence, and was obliged to fall back. The Ricard division returned to the charge, entered Vauchamps a second time, and would have had great difficulty in keeping the place, but for the movements on the two flanks of the village. Grouchy, after having made a detour through the woods, poured his troops into Vauchamps on the left, whilst the Lagrange division effected a similar movement on the right by traversing the wood of Beaumont. Blucher, suspecting from the vigour and simultaneousness of the movements that were being operated around him that Napoleon himself was present, resolved to fall back. But it was no longer time to do so with impunity. On one hand, Ricard's infantry, making a last effort on Vauchamps, drove out the Ziethen division, and on the other hand, Grouchy, debouching abruptly from the woods, threatened to cut off his retreat. This division, formed into squares, tried at first to make head against our cavalry, but vigorously charged by Grouchy's squadrons, the lines were broken, and part of the men laid down their arms. The rest sought refuge with the main body of the Prussian troops. Our horsemen made about 2000 prisoners, took a dozen pieces of cannon and several standards. A thousand men, either killed or wounded, were left at Vauchamps and the environs.

But Napoleon hoped to gain still greater advantages over Blucher's troops. He ordered that the Prussian general should

be pursued without relaxation, and himself directed the pursuit during half the day. Marmont, at the head of the Ricard and Lagrange infantry, supported besides by the Leval Spanish division, marched forward on the highroad that leads from Montmirail to Chalons, through Vauchamps and Champaubert. He had in front the artillery of the guard, commanded by Druot, and on his wings, Grouchy's cavalry on one side, and the cavalry of the guard and of General St. Germain on the other. It was in this order he pursued Blucher, who was retiring in two compact masses, that of Kleist on the left of the route, that of Capzewitz on the right, with his artillery and baggage on the route itself. The Prussian general had very little cavalry to protect his infantry.

From eleven in the forenoon to three in the afternoon the French kept up the pursuit, pouring bullets and often grape-shot on the enemy. In this way they reached Janvilliers, Fromentières, and Champaubert. The pursuers perceived that two of the enemy's battalions, posted in a wood, had remained behind. They were surrounded and obliged to surrender. At the same time Grouchy, seeing that in order to obtain the mastery over all or part of the two masses of enemies that were advancing along both sides of the route, it would be necessary to forestall their arrival at the entrance of the woods that surround Etoges, conceived the design of dashing through the woods as fast as his horses could go, in order to precede Blucher. For this purpose he ordered the light artillery to join him as quickly as possible. Whilst he was executing this movement the artillery cannonaded at every pause Blucher's two columns. This kind of warfare continued to the close of the day, when the Prussians were seen suddenly to stop, and their lines immediately bristled with bayonets. Grouchy had, in fact, got in advance of them with a portion of his squadrons, and attacked them on the left, whilst General St. Germain did the same on the right with the cavalry lately arrived from Versailles. Blucher, placed in the midst of his infantry, did all in his power to infuse his spirit into his troops, and succeeded in bringing them, in pretty good order, as far as the entrance of Etoges, but not without experiencing considerable loss. General Grouchy, though deprived of his artillery, which had not been able to follow him, charged Blucher's infantry several times, and penetrated their ranks sword in hand, whilst General St. Germain did as much on his side. And here, by the instrumentality of cold steel alone, the French killed some hundred men, and took more than 2000 prisoners, besides several flags and pieces of artillery. On arriving at the border of the woods that lay between them and Etoges they were obliged to pause.

The French had already taken, killed, or wounded about 7000 of Marshal Blücher's men. But Marmont ambitioned still more spoils. He suspected that the Prussian general would pass the night at Etoges, and that his harassed troops would scatter themselves confusedly through the village or in the neighbouring forest, and he thought that by appearing suddenly in the midst of them during the night, he would throw them into great disorder, and above all, drive them beyond Etoges to the foot of the plateau, which, during so many days, had been the theatre of war. Destined, in all probability, to again defend this position, whilst Napoleon carried his arms elsewhere, Marmont fixed his mind on taking up a position at Etoges itself, whence he could command the route of Vertus. He therefore resolved to make a night attack on Blücher.

But Marshal Marmont had only a small body of forces at his disposal, for his soldiers were already dispersed in the environs looking for provisions. Marmont was followed by the Leval division, which Ney asserted was under his command. After a pretty warm discussion between the two marshals, Marmont took a detachment of this division, and with one of his regiments of marines, dashed into the wood under favour of the darkness, and came suddenly down on Etoges, at the moment when the enemy, worn out by fatigue, began to enjoy a few minutes' repose. This unexpected attack was crowned with success. Prussians and Russians, attacked before they could resume the defensive, were thrust out of Etoges, and obliged in the middle of the night to fly to Bergères and Vertus. The French made a large number of prisoners, amongst whom were the Russian general Orossoff himself with his staff. The latter part of this day Blücher lost more than 2000 men and a large quantity of artillery.

This day—the 14th—named after Vauchamps, cost Blücher from 9000 to 10,000 men, either killed, wounded, or made prisoners. It would not be possible to put a more glorious termination to this admirable train of operations. Napoleon had set out on the 9th of February from Nogent-sur-Seine; he arrived on the 10th at Champaubert, where on that day he took or destroyed Olsouvieff's corps; and on the 11th, conquered, at Montmirail, Sacken's troops. On the 12th he beat and drove back on Chateau-Thierry d'York's troops, employed the 13th in rebuilding the bridge of the Marne, for the purpose of sending Mortier in pursuit of the enemy, and on the 14th returned to Montmirail, and attacked Blücher, who had maladroïtly thrown himself in his way, as if to furnish him an opportunity of overwhelming the last of the four detachments of the army of Silesia. Thus, almost without fighting a regular

battle, Napoleon had in four quickly succeeding combats entirely disorganised the army of Silesia, captured or killed 28,000 out of 60,000 men, carried off an immense quantity of artillery and flags, and severely punished the most presumptuous, the bravest, and the most embittered of his adversaries. Surely Napoleon had now reason to be proud of his army and of himself, and of the last scintillations of his wondrous star, wondrous even amidst calamity !

Napoleon sent on immediately to Paris the 18,000 prisoners he had made, in order that the Parisians might see them with their own eyes, and that in beholding these trophies, worthy of the wars of Italy, their faith in the genius and good fortune of their emperor might again revive.

The Parisians had learned in succession the unhopèd-for triumphs of Napoleon, and excepting some, carried away by party spirit or hatred of the imperial dynasty, had rejoiced at his success. The announcement of columns of prisoners had excited to the highest degree the expectation of the Parisians, who hoped to see them defile on the boulevards within two or three days. But they scarcely dared indulge a sentiment of joy, for at the same time that they learned the defeat of Blucher and his lieutenants at Champaubert, at Montmirail, at Chateau-Thierry, and at Vauchamps, they also learned that Schwarzenberg was ready to force the passage of the Seine from Nogent to Montereau, and that Platow's Cossacks had appeared in the forest of Fontainebleau. Unhappy Paris, from whose bosom, during twenty years, fulminating terrors had been launched upon many European capitals ; she was now, in her turn, a prey to the most terrible anguish. Victory even was no guarantee against these alarms, for one enemy was no sooner beaten on the Marne than another appeared on the Seine, and tranquillised as to the state of things at Meaux, she was alarmed by the apprehension of what might occur in the direction of Melun and Fontainebleau. Earnest entreaties had reached Napoleon from Paris, imploring him to return to the Seine. On this account he had abandoned Marmont before the close of the battle-day at Vauchamps, and returned to Montmirail, to give new orders and prepare for new combats.

We shall now relate what had taken place in the great army of Prince Schwarzenberg. When Napoleon had quitted the Aube and the Seine for the Marne, the allied sovereigns had repaired to Troyes, and their army, going in advance, had occupied the course of the Seine from Nogent to Montereau, and had even endeavoured to extend the line to the Yonne, in order to avert the danger of being outflanked on the left. The declared object of the grand army of Bohemia was to march on Paris along the two banks of the Seine, by Fontainebleau and Melun,

whilst the army of Silesia, following the course of the Marne, should arrive at Paris by Meaux. The expectation of entering the capital of France inflamed at this moment the imagination of Alexander. Whilst the Emperor Francis lived in a retired manner at Troyes, receiving little society, and visiting only M. de Metternich, the Emperor Alexander, ever in a state of feverish activity, passed from one detachment of the army to the other, affecting to direct everything, and incessantly advising Blucher to await his arrival before entering Paris. The King of Prussia, to please the patriots of his staff, yielded to all the whims of his ally, but with the awkwardness of a sage, ill-fitted to play this empty and restless part. It is in this state the allies were found by a trustworthy eye-witness, the brave and learned General Reynier, who had been exchanged for General Count de Merveldt (both had been taken prisoners at Leipsic), and who, when this change was effected, had passed through Troyes on his return to Paris. General Reynier was presented to the allied sovereigns, and listened to their observations with extreme attention.\* The Emperor Francis conjured him to repeat to his son-in-law the advice he had so often given him—to yield to the pressure of circumstances, and give up what was demanded of him, since he could not retain it. He bade him also reflect on the position of Austria at the actual time, in order to learn that submitting to the harsh necessities of the present was often only a means to secure future advantages. The King of Prussia had, according to his wont, said scarcely anything; but Alexander had spoken with extraordinary vivacity. He had, in the first place, asked General Reynier when he expected to reach Paris, and the general having replied that he hoped to be there on the 14th or 15th of February, Alexander said—“Very well, Blucher will be there before you; Napoleon has humiliated me, and I will humiliate him; and I am so far from making war on France, that were he killed, I would desist immediately.” “It is then for the Bourbons that your majesty makes war,” said General Reynier. “The Bourbons,” rejoined Alexander, “I care not for them. Choose a leader amongst yourselves, amongst the illustrious generals who have contributed so much to the glory of France, and we are ready to accept him.” Alexander, then entering into the most extraordinary and confidential communications, hinted to General Reynier the project of putting Bernadotte on the throne of France, as Catherine, forty years previously, had

\* No sooner had General Reynier arrived at Paris than he made a faithful report of these conversations, which was immediately sent to Napoleon. This report, one of the most curious of the secret documents of the time, is worthy of entire credit, for General Reynier was incapable of disfiguring the truth, and besides, his report accords with all that the diplomatic despatches, French and foreign, tell us touching the headquarters of the allied sovereigns.

placed Poniatowski on the throne of Poland. On hearing this disclosure General Reynier had greatly disconcerted the czar by expressing the contempt which the military men of France had conceived for the conduct and talents of the new Swedish prince. Alexander, surprised and displeased, dismissed General Reynier, who immediately set out for Paris, to offer his services to Napoleon, an offer highly meritorious in his circumstances, for he had rejected the most flattering offers of Alexander, to remain faithful to France in her misfortunes. General Reynier was Swiss by birth, but French in heart and act.

Wounded pride and the desire of vengeance dictated at this moment every act of the Emperor Alexander. It was under these influences he had suspended the sittings of congress, assuming as a reason for not resuming them that M. de Caulaincourt had not immediately accepted the Chatillon propositions. He displayed in this matter a dogged determination, and wished to prevent all further negotiation. M. de Metternich, aided by Lord Castlereagh, combated this wish of the czar. The Austrian minister persevered in his policy of not carrying too far a struggle which beyond a certain point would only tend to give a preponderance to Russia. The English minister, ready to abandon warfare if Antwerp and Genoa were given up to him, had, in opposing the Emperor Alexander, made use of the letter that M. de Caulaincourt had secretly addressed to M. de Metternich, and in which he asked if, in accepting the proposed bases, he would at least obtain a suspension of arms. Supporting their arguments on this letter, the Austrian and English ministers said that France being ready to yield to the wishes of the allies, there was no motive for carrying hostilities further; that such a course would be only to incur useless risks for a purpose which could not be the avowed object of any of the allied powers. In fact, the Emperor Francis could not declare to Europe that he was going to make war for the purpose of dethroning his daughter, and the British cabinet, though public opinion was become greatly modified in England, could not avow to Parliament that the war was being carried on for the purpose of re-establishing the Bourbons. Lord Castlereagh was now in a position to deprive France of Antwerp and Genoa, and should he expose himself to a reverse by outstepping the object of his mission, it would be impossible for him to appear either before the House of Lords or Commons in England. In short, in prolonging hostilities, there was a risk that France as a nation might rise against them, for already in some parts the peasants were arming, the convoys of the allies were intercepted, stragglers from their army were killed, and this danger seemed likely to increase, and must necessarily add considerably to the difficulties of this envenomed struggle. As

neither Austria's troops nor England's gold could be dispensed with, and as M. de Metternich as well as Lord Castlereagh had displayed remarkable firmness on this occasion, the other allies had consented to the resumption of conferences. Accordingly the plenipotentiaries, who were still at Chatillon, received a copy of preliminaries, whose acceptance would put an instant stop to hostilities; but the form was so humiliating that an acceptance would be considered equivalent to entering Paris. This was a consolation expressly prepared for the Emperor Alexander. He was satisfied, hoping that Napoleon would not accept these new offers, and meanwhile he urged Prince Schwarzenberg to march on Paris, to spare himself the mortification of arriving there after Marshal Blucher, or being stopped by the signing of peace at the moment he should be about to enter the capital.

As a consequence of these considerations, Prince Schwarzenberg had advanced in a direction parallel to the Seine, from Nogent to Montereau. He ordered the Wittgenstein corps and the troops of Marshal de Wrède to advance on Nogent and Bray; the Wurtembergers were to advance on Montereau; and those of Colloredo and Giulay on the Yonne, these latter having orders to cross the river and advance on Fontainebleau. The Russian and Prussian reserves were to remain under Barclay de Tolly, between Troyes and Nogent. Wittgenstein and de Wrède, having presented themselves at Nogent and Bray, were received at Nogent by General Bourmont, whom Marshal Victor had left there with only 1200 men. This general, after a heroic combat, repulsed the enemy with a loss of 1500 men. But at Bray the allies found only the national guard, and forced the passage. Marshal Victor, seeing the passage of the Seine forced at Bray, did not dare remain behind at Nogent, and retired on Provins and Nangis. Marshal Oudinot, borne along in this retrograde movement, and having only the Rothenbourg division to bring in aid, had followed the retreat of Marshal Victor, and both had taken up a position on the little river Yères, which crosses the Brie and falls into the Seine near Villeneuve St. Georges. The two marshals, drawn up behind this narrow river, awaited the coming of Napoleon. The brave General Pajol, always on horseback, spite of his gaping wounds, could not keep his position at Montereau when Bray and Nogent were abandoned; he had joined General Alix, who had just defended Sens with the greatest vigour, and had fallen back from the Yonne on the Loing Canal, and from the Loing Canal on Fontainebleau.

Thus, on the 14th of February, the day that Napoleon completed at Vauchamps the defeat of the army of Silesia, the troops of the army of Bohemia were posted in this manner;

the Prince of Wittgenstein was at Provins, the Marshal de Wrède at Nangis, the Wurtembergers at Montereau, the Prince of Colloredo in the forest of Fontainebleau, General Giulay at Pont-sur-Yonne, the Cossacks in the neighbourhood of Orleans, Maurice de Liechtenstein with the Austrian reserves at Sens, and Barclay de Tolly with the Russian and Prussian guards between Nogent and Bray. Some intelligence of Blucher's defeat had reached the headquarters of the allies, but they were not yet aware of the extent of his reverses, and they flattered themselves they could reach Paris by Fontainebleau or Melun.

On learning this melancholy state of things, Napoleon, with his wondrous activity, which knew no limits but the physical strength of his soldiers, immediately left Vauchamps for Montmirail, followed by the young and old guard and all the cavalry. He left Marshal Marmont the task he had already confided to him, that of holding a position between the Seine and the Marne, from Etoges to Montmirail, to keep a close watch on the débris of Blucher's army, and to aid Mortier, who had been sent in pursuit of Sacken and d'York in the direction of Soissons. Then Napoleon made arrangements to advance to the Seine and encounter Prince Schwarzenberg.

A grave question now presented itself to the mind of Napoleon: Would it be well to go straight from Montmirail to Nogent by Sézanne (the route he had taken before), reach the Seine by the shortest way, and so fall unexpectedly on Prince Schwarzenberg's flank; or whether would it be better to follow the retrograde movement of the Marshals Victor and Oudinot, whom it was supposed had been forced to retire still further since the last intelligence; would it be better to fall back to the banks of the Yères, join the two marshals, and combined with them, attack Prince Schwarzenberg in front, and drive him back on the Seine that he had crossed? Were it always possible during war to have timely information of the designs of the enemy, Napoleon might have known that the different corps of the army of Bohemia were dispersed between Provins, Nangis, Montereau, Fontainebleau, and Sens, and then throwing himself into the midst of them with 25,000 men by the road that leads from Sézanne to Nogent, which was the shortest, he would have taken in flank the scattered corps of the enemy, joined with his right Victor and Oudinot, thrown back in succession Wittgenstein and de Wrède on the Prince of Wurtemberg, and all three on Colloredo, and destroyed or made prisoners a portion of those that had crossed the Seine.\* But

\* I must here reply to the ill-founded reproach that General Koch, in his excellent and conscientious work on the campaign of 1814, addresses to Napoleon for not having marched directly from Montmirail to Provins, instead of



Napoleon, having employed five days in fighting the army of Silesia, was ignorant of what had occurred in that of Bohemia, and in this ignorance of the actual state of things was obliged to shape his conduct according to probabilities. Now, the great probability was that the marshals, after having fallen back a considerable distance, would have fallen back still further, that they would have paused behind the little river of Yères, that Schwarzenberg would be close upon them, attacking them with at least 80,000 men, having perhaps already conquered them, and in this case, by advancing directly on Nogent or Provins with only 25,000 men, Napoleon would incur the risk of meeting Schwarzenberg returning with 80,000, which would be a serious matter, before he should be joined by the two marshals. Besides, all the cross-roads from Montmirail to Nogent and from Montmirail to Provins were detestable, and might be impassable for his troops. For this reason, which was sufficiently strong, and from prudential motives, the safest course, instead of advancing direct to the Seine, was to fall back on Yères, as the marshals themselves had done, and join them by the paved route from Montmirail to Meaux, from Meaux to Fontenay and Guignes, and this combination would raise his army to 60,000 men, which would be sufficient to drive back Prince Schwarzenberg on the Seine. Instead of taking the Austrian general in flank, Napoleon would attack him in front, but it might be that instead of finding his army in one solid mass, the French would find them dispersed in different corps, and it would not then be impossible to treat them as they had treated Blücher.

This was the only plan concordant with good sense, and Napoleon, who in his military projects always combined prudence with boldness, did not hesitate to adopt it. He, the same evening, ordered his guard, both young and old, infantry and cavalry, the Leval Spanish division, and the cavalry of

falling back on Meaux. General Koch, always clear-sighted and impartial, is the only writer of the period that deserves entire confidence; however, even he is sometimes mistaken, especially as he had not access to the emperor's correspondence, for which reason he could not know or appreciate the motives that dictated the acts he criticises. It is, as we have already frequently repeated, with extreme reserve that any one should pronounce on Napoleon's conduct, and we may safely say, that when he errs, which seldom happens in his military combinations, he has been excited by his political feelings, or has been left in a forced ignorance of the enemy's movements. But in any other case we may affirm with confidence, that his movements are calculated with incomparable depth and foresight. It is necessary then, before giving an opinion, that we should read all that remains of his written intentions, and be convinced that when we cannot discover his motives in the two causes we have just named, that they can be found in the facts themselves, if studied with greater attention. In short, it rarely happens that in reperusing these facts we do not find fresh cause to admire his genius, even whilst we deplore the unlicensed ambition that led to his ruin.

General St. Germain, to make the next day—the 15th—a forced march as far as Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and he set out himself for Meaux, in order to superintend the movements of his troops.

Having arrived on the afternoon of the 15th at Meaux, he there resolved upon his final arrangements. It was on Meaux that General Macdonald had fallen back after the retreat that had so much afflicted him, and it was at Meaux that he had tried to reorganise his *corps d'armée*. This corps, with the débris he had brought back, with some battalions drawn from the dépôts in Paris, and with all the national guards that could be collected, were distributed into three divisions, amounting in all to about 12,000 men. Napoleon despatched them immediately by the route that leads from Meaux to Fontenay, to the Yères, this little stream of water behind which all our forces were concentrated. He ordered Marshals Victor and Oudinot, who had retired to this spot, to keep their position, and informed them that he would join them next day—the 16th. The noble cavalry brought from Spain had already marched beyond Paris, to the number of 4000. They were the finest troops in the world. Napoleon posted them at Guignes, where he supposed the principal battle of the campaign would take place. The two divisions of the young guard organised at Paris had just left, under General Charpentier and Boyer, to advance along the left bank of the Seine, and occupy the Fontainebleau route. Napoleon might certainly have brought them up on the right bank of the Seine, and combined all his resources in the neighbourhood of Guignes, but it would be risking too much to leave Paris unprotected along the left bank, as the allies had sent a considerable number of their forces in that direction. He had consequently sent these two divisions forward on the Essonne, recommending them to fight to the last extremity, and so endeavour to protect Paris on the left bank of the Seine, whilst he would endeavour to free the capital on the right bank by a decisive battle. Lastly, he gave directions necessary to make him sole master of the passages of the rivers along which he was manœuvring; he gave orders for preparing provisions along the routes, and also to collect the field-labourers' carts, in order that the soldiers of the guard, transported on these carts, might be able to make double or treble stages. The next day he set out from Meaux, and arrived by Fontenay at Guignes, at the very moment when the Marshals Victor and Oudinot, flung back on the Yères, were disputing possession of the banks of that river with the van of Prince de Wittgenstein and the Marshal de Wrède. This state of things justified the resolution Napoleon had taken, for once united to the two marshals, he need no longer fear Wittgenstein

and de Wrède, as he should find himself at the head of 60,000 men wherewith to oppose 50,000, and the result would undoubtedly be a signal success.

Napoleon considering that though a great mass of the enemy's forces lay before him, still Schwarzenberg's entire army could not be there, for he received intelligence of the enemy's presence at the same time at Montereau, at Fontainebleau, and Sens, and even in the environs of Orleans. He consequently concluded that more than half the grand army of Bohemia did not lie before him, and he resolved to immediately assume the offensive. Though his guard and the Leval division had not arrived, he had under his command, including the troops of the three marshals Oudinot, Victor, Macdonald, and the Spanish cavalry, about 35,000 or 36,000 men, and these he thought sufficient, when he was present, to attack 50,000. Besides, the 25,000 men who were coming up would join in a few hours, and he made arrangements to commence fighting at the break of day.

Effectively on the 17th he was on horseback from early morning directing in person the movements of his troops. Marshal Victor's troops having formed the rearguard in the retreat from the Seine to the Yères, now naturally constituted the vanguard. This marshal advanced, having in the centre the Dufour and Hamelinaye divisions of reserve, and these troops he did not hesitate to expose, because they belonged to General Gerard; the wings were formed of the Duhesme and Chataux divisions of the 2nd corps, Marshal Victor's own troops, which he spared as much as possible. On the right, the cavalry of the 5th corps, under General Milhaud; on the left, the cavalry of Spain, under General Treilhard, marched deployed, ready to charge *à outrance*. Marshal Victor was followed by the Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald. In the rear, but at a distance of several leagues, the guard, travelling on carts, covered the route from Meaux to Guignes.

Hardly had Marshal Victor set out from Guignes for Mormant than he perceived Count Pahlen with 2500 foot and about 1800 horse soldiers; these formed the vanguard of the Prince de Wittgenstein. Here was noble prey that presented itself at the commencement of the operations against the army of Bohemia. General Gerard, who showed himself superior to others, and even seemed to outdo all his former deeds during this severe campaign, advanced at the head of a battalion of the 32nd; young soldiers, drafted into an old skeleton regiment renowned in the Italian campaigns. He entered Mormant sword in hand, and drove out Count Pahlen's infantry, who had taken refuge there in the hope of being assisted by the Bavarians, who were posted at Nangis. Deprived of this shelter, the

Russian infantry was obliged to cross the open space that separates Mormant from Nangis. Druot, debouching from Mormant with his artillery, covered the Russians with grape-shot, whilst that on the left, the Count de Valmy, with the squadrons lately arrived from Spain, and on the right, Count Milhaud, with the dragoons that came the preceding year, attacked the enemy with drawn swords. The squares of Russian infantry, spite their solidity, were broken and all captured with their artillery. Their cavalry was overtaken before they could save themselves by flight, and a great part made prisoners or destroyed. This affair cost the Russians 4000 men, reckoning prisoners with the killed and wounded, and eleven pieces of cannon.

This commencement promised Prince Schwarzenberg's army treatment pretty similar to what Blucher's army had experienced. However, it was necessary that the French should keep up an incessant pursuit if they wished to obtain the result they had a right to hope, and Napoleon consequently accelerated the forward movement of the different corps. The French advanced rapidly on Nangis, throwing back at the same time the Russian troops of Wittgenstein, whose vanguard they had already annihilated, and the Bavarian troops, that retired to their *corps de bataille*. The success of this new series of operations depended essentially on the immediate passage of the Seine, for if Napoleon succeeded in crossing that river before all the enemy's corps had repassed, and especially those that had ventured as far as Fontainebleau, he was almost sure of encountering in detail those that should be latest in returning. He therefore advanced rapidly towards the bridges of Nogent, Bray, and Montereau that lay before him. He sent Marshal Oudinot forward through Provins to Nogent, with part of the cavalry of Spain, under Count de Valmy; and sent Marshal Macdonald to Bray, by the way of Donnemarie. As to himself, he turned to the right, followed by Marshal Victor's troops, and advanced on Montereau, passing through Villeneuve. Not knowing which of these three bridges would be easiest to retake, Napoleon determined to attack the three at the same time. By marching boldly forward the French might carry one or two of the three bridges, and then it would be possible to cross the Seine in time to cut off the retreat of those corps of the enemy that had advanced too far.

In advancing on Villeneuve, Marshal Victor, still preceded by the Dufour and the Hamelinaye divisions, headed by General Gerard, met a little beyond Valjouan the Bavarian division Lamotte, that was seeking to escape, and that had very little cavalry to oppose to ours. The Lamotte division occupied the highroad transversely; the left wing was strongly supported

by the village of Villeneuve, the right deployed in a little plain surrounded by trees. General Gerard, who was actively engaged in every encounter with the enemy, advanced on Villeneuve with a battalion of the 86th, carried the place at the point of the bayonet, and thus deprived the Lamotte division of the support of this village. The division was then obliged to retire across the little plain that lay behind, and seek refuge in the woods. This was a favourable moment for our cavalry to charge. General Lheritier, who commanded a portion of Milhaud's dragoons, was on the spot, and if he had profited of the opportunity, the fate of the Lamotte division was decided. Our soldiers, always intelligent, called loudly on the cavalry, but whether General Lheritier awaited orders from Marshal Victor, that did not arrive, or whether it was that he did not perceive the favourable opportunity, certain it is he remained motionless, and the Bavarian infantry crossed the open plain unmolested. Happily General Gerard, guided by a peasant, had skirted the border of the wood, and now suddenly debouched with his infantry on the flank of the Lamotte division, that was retiring in squares. He attacked these squares at the point of the bayonet, broke several, and now received most timely help from General Bordessoule, who, observing the immobility of the rest of the cavalry, rushed upon the enemy with three hundred young cuirassiers, just arrived from the dépôt at Versailles. These brave beginners, with an ardour and ferocity not unfrequently displayed by young soldiers, charged the Bavarian broken lines with impetuosity, and sabred a great number of the enemy. This division lost on this occasion 1000 men, but the French might have taken or destroyed the entire. Our troops now advanced to Salins, where Marshal Victor stopped to pass the night, though he had orders to march to Montereau. He wished General Gerard to go there; but the latter, whose troops were harassed by a long march and two engagements, were unequal to the task, and it was the duty of Marshal Victor, whose two divisions had not fought during the day, to form the head of the column by night. The marshal did nothing of the kind; he was fatigued, ill, dejected, discontented with Napoleon, who had reproached him with having badly defended the Seine; in a word, he was suffering morally and physically, though still ready to reappear on the battlefield and prove himself an officer as intelligent as brave. He passed the night at Salins, at a league from the bridge of Montereau, where great advantages awaited us, had our activity corresponded to the urgency of circumstances.

Napoleon, overwhelmed with fatigue, had taken a moment's repose at Nangis, intending to rise in the middle of the night, according to his custom, to issue orders, which it was necessary

to give at night, that they might reach their destination by break of day. He rose at once, and learned that Marshal Victor had remained at Salins. His irritation was extreme, for all the reports received the evening before announced that the enemy in retreating had taken precautions to dispute with us the possession of the bridges of Nogent and Bray, which was but too easy to accomplish. In fact, the high grounds which at Montereau border and command the Seine, are at Bray and Nogent far in the background, and consequently afford no prominent position from which the bridges could be fired on. On the contrary, villages extending along both banks, and well barricaded, offered posts which the army of Bohemia, concentrated on account of its retreat, could long dispute with us. There now only remained the bridge of Montereau, and this bridge was so much the more important, as, if the French crossed it, it would be possible to cut off Colloredo's corps, that had ventured as far as Fontainebleau, and so deprive the enemy at one blow of about 15,000 or 20,000 men, which would be a signal triumph. Napoleon ordered Marshal Victor to quit his bed instantly, summon the troops from their bivouac, and march to Montereau. He also prepared to go there himself. Before setting out he ordered Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald to carry, if possible, the one Nogent, the other Bray, but if they failed, to fall back on him, that all might debouch on Montereau. The guard having made a day's journey on carts, had arrived at Nangis; Napoleon ordered them to follow Victor to Montereau.

A resolution was taken on this day which attested the importance of our recent success. When Napoleon arrived that evening at Nangis, he met the Count de Paar, an aide-de-camp of Prince Schwarzenberg, who had come *à l'improviste* to demand a suspension of arms, a suspension that M. de Caulaincourt had vainly offered a few days before to purchase by the most bitter sacrifices. How came it that so much self-confidence, haughtiness, and severity on the part of the allies had suddenly given way to so much prudence and moderation? The sovereigns assembled at Nogent around the Prince de Schwarzenberg, after having first heard vague reports of Blücher, had soon learned in detail the extent of the reverses experienced by this fiery-spirited general, and conscious of Napoleon's presence by the severe attacks they had just experienced themselves, they suddenly conceived opinions more modest than those they had entertained up to the preceding evening. The army of Bohemia was, in fact, in a very serious position, for this army was advancing abreast in a battle-line of more than twenty leagues in extent, from Nogent to Fontainebleau, and in four columns, of which one or two ran imminent risk of being surrounded and destroyed, should Napoleon get in advance of them at the passage of the

Seine. To put an instant stop to his further progress was of the highest importance, and spite of the customary remarks of the party that advocated war *à outrance*, Prince Schwarzenberg, despising them on this occasion, took the resolution of immediately sending an aide-de-camp to Napoleon, proposing that both parties should pause where they were, saying that certainly it was owing to his ignorance of what was going on at Chatillon that the emperor had carried hostilities so far; that the conferences, temporarily suspended, had been resumed, on bases admitted by M. de Caulaincourt himself; and that within a few hours they should probably learn that the preliminaries of peace were signed. Such an assertion must be regarded either as a fraud or an evidence of extraordinary simplicity. M. de Caulaincourt had not accepted the insulting propositions made by the allies; he had limited himself to demanding confidentially of M. de Metternich whether the summary acceptance of their propositions would be at least productive of a suspension of arms, and this inquiry he had made in a moment of despair on the morrow of the battle of La Rothière. But to suppose that after the battles of Champaubert, Montmirail, Chateau-Thierry, Vauchamps, Mormant, and Villeneuve—to suppose, we say, that after such combats Napoleon would consent that France should be circumscribed within her ancient limits, and what was still worse, renounce the privilege of having an opinion on the fate that was prepared for Italy, Germany, Holland, and Poland, this was truly a strange presumption, and equal at least to that of which we have more than once accused Napoleon.

Be this as it may, it was the substance of what the aide-de-camp of the Prince de Schwarzenberg was commissioned to propose at the French headquarters. So Napoleon was expected to pause in the midst of victory, and consent to his own and France's degradation.

He listened with an ironical smile to the intelligence that a messenger had arrived from the allies. He would not admit him to his presence, but he consented to receive Prince Schwarzenberg's letter, saying that he would reply at a later period. In fact, he did not know what was the nature of the propositions to which the message he received referred. Having but rarely held communications with M. de Caulaincourt, from whom he was separated by the entire army of Bohemia, Napoleon was quite ignorant of what had taken place at Chatillon; he did not know that after the most abhorrent propositions had been made to M. de Caulaincourt, that the latter had written confidentially to M. de Metternich; he did not know that the Austrian minister had regarded the letter of M. de Caulaincourt as an official document, and as such, had transmitted it to the allies, and that in order to induce Napoleon to pause in his

successful career, it was not only required that France should shrink back within the limits of 1790, but she was also required to renounce her position as a European power. Napoleon was ignorant of all these details, or he would have given the Austrian envoy a very different reception. In the proposal the allies made to him, he only saw a desire of arresting his victorious progress, without suspecting the nature of the conditions of peace, to which allusion was made. And it certainly was not probable that he would consent to sheath his sword at the moment when by a last successful effort he might hope to change the entire aspect of affairs. He therefore deferred his reply, and continued his march. But fearing that M. de Caulaincourt, whose mind was a prey to the most horrible torments, and whose society at Chatillon was composed of enemies who would hide from him our success—fearing that under such circumstances he might yield under the difficulties by which he was beset, and make too extensive a use of the powers entrusted to him, Napoleon, before mounting his horse to set out for Montereau, wrote him the following letter:—

“NANGIS, 18th February.

“I gave you a *carte blanche*, in order to save Paris, and avoid a battle, which was the last hope of the nation. The battle has been fought; Providence has blessed our arms. I have taken between 30,000 and 40,000 prisoners; I have captured 200 pieces of cannon, a great number of generals, and destroyed several armies, almost without striking a blow. I yesterday came up with Prince Schwarzenberg’s army, which I hope to destroy before it repasses our frontiers. You ought to assume the same attitude; you ought to do everything to obtain peace; but my desire is that you should not sign anything without my orders, because I alone understand my position. As a general principle, I only desire a solid and honourable peace, and it can only be such on the bases proposed at Frankfort. If the allies had accepted your propositions of the 9th, there would have been no battle; I would not have incurred any risk at a moment when the least reverse might have brought ruin on France, but on the other hand, I should not have learned the secret of my adversary’s weakness. It is but fair that I should enjoy the advantages of fortune that are offered to me. I desire peace, but it shall not be one that will impose on France conditions more humiliating than those of Frankfort. My position is now certainly much better than when the allies were at Frankfort; they might then defy me, I had obtained no advantage over them, and they were far from my territory. But now things are very different. I have gained immense advantages over them, advantages that find no parallel in my military career of twenty years, a career, too, not wholly devoid of glory. I am ready to put an end to hostilities, and allow the enemies to return quietly to their own homes, if they sign preliminaries based on the Frankfort propositions.”



If the allies conjured up illusions for themselves, Napoleon, it was plain, did the same for himself, and instead of contenting himself with rejecting what was unpleasant, he demanded what, under the circumstances, he could not obtain.

Whilst Napoleon employed the first hours of the morning of the 18th in this manner, Marshal Victor had at length marched on Montereau, and arrived there at a very early hour. General Pajol, after having rallied his troops in the wood of Valence, had advanced with his cavalry and some battalions of the national guards. He reached the borders of the wood of Valence at the very moment that Marshal Victor debouched opposite the little hillock of Surville, which commands the Seine and the little town of Montereau. This hillock, which descends in a tolerably gentle slope on the Valence and Salins sides, breaks on the Seine side in an abrupt declivity. From the top of this eminence we perceive the little town of Montereau lying at the foot, and the two rivers that mingle their waters at this spot as well as the bridge of the Seine are objects of great importance, for which the two armies were about to contend desperately. If the French succeeded in quickly getting possession of the hillock, it was possible, by dashing up to the bridge, which was of stone, and less liable to be destroyed than one of wood, to get possession of that, too, before the enemy could cut it down. But to attack the hillock was not a slight undertaking, the Wurtembergers being stationed there in great force. It was the Prince-Royal of Wurtemberg that occupied the position. This prince, whom Napoleon had formerly treated very ill, and whom the Emperor Alexander, on the contrary, loaded with favours, intending even to give him in marriage his sister, the Archduchess Catherine—this intellectual and brave prince sought to distinguish himself, and efface by his services to the allies his father's long devotedness to the French empire. On the possession of the bridge of Montereau depended the safety of the Austrian corps of Colloredo, that had ventured as far as Fontainebleau, and whose retreat was impossible should the French cross the Seine before this corps had fallen back at least as far as Moret or Nemours. But notwithstanding the danger of the position, the Prince of Wurtemberg was resolved to resist, at the risk of being driven from the hillock of Surville into the Seine.

The Prince de Wurtemberg had ranged his infantry from Villaron to St. Martin, facing the route by which the French were advancing. His rear was covered by the hillock of Surville. He was, besides, protected by a large quantity of artillery.

General Pajol, ever brave and intelligent, had endeavoured to advance with his cavalry on the rear of the Wurtembergers.

position, in order to take possession of the highroad that runs behind the hillock of Surville, and make a rapid descent on the town of Montereau. But stopped by a destructive fire from the artillery, he was obliged to wait the execution of his project until Marshal Victor's infantry should have made their attack on the hillock.

One of the marshal's divisions, commanded by his son-in-law, General Chataux, a distinguished officer, arrived first, and exhibited great impatience to repair the fault that Napoleon had just blamed so severely. This division advanced with impetuosity on the hillock of Surville, with their right towards Villaron, their left towards St. Martin. The soldiers, led on with spirit, tried to escalate the position which was protected by *clotures*. They succeeded at first, were afterwards repulsed, and made repeated attempts without attaining their object, notwithstanding prodigious efforts of courage.

General Chataux did not spare himself, but his very impetuosity involved a danger, that of exhausting this brave division before it could be supported, and thus uselessly shedding most precious blood. Soon the Duhesme division arrived, with the marshal himself, and this division replaced that of Chataux, which advanced more to the right to attack the hillock on the least precipitous side. The brave General Chataux, marching at the head of his soldiers, was struck by a ball before his father-in-law's eyes, and fell dying into his arms. This fatal accident damped the ardour of the attack on the right; and the Duhesme division on the left, attacking the position on the least accessible side, was not likely to succeed, when General Gerard arrived with the Dufour and Hamelinaye divisions.

Napoleon, informed of the difficulties of the attack, and displeased with Marshal Victor, had sent General Gerard orders to take the chief command, which General Gerard did immediately. Seeing that the artillery of the Wurtembergers caused us serious annoyance, the general combined all his batteries, as well as those of the 2nd corps, and directed sixty pieces of cannon against the Wurtembergers, in order to break their ranks by this violent fire before attacking them hand to hand. He caused them so much damage, that wishing to free themselves from this murderous fire, they attempted to fall on our cannon and carry them off. General Gerard allowed them to advance, then rushed on them at the head of a battalion, and forced them back on their position at the point of the bayonet. At this moment Napoleon arrived with the old guard, and Pajol, after having driven back the enemy's cavalry, threatened to turn the hillock of Surville. At this aspect the firmness of the Wurtembergers was shaken, and they thought of retreating across the bridge of Montereau. But time was not allowed

them for this movement; the French attacked them en masse, ascended the hillock, and dislodged them by main force. Pajol, setting off in full gallop at the head of a regiment of chasseurs, dashed into the highroad which runs behind the hillock of Surville, forming at this point a rapid descent, and attacked the Wurtembergers, who were accumulated on the declivity; whilst the artillery of the guard, with their cannon directed against the hillock itself, riddled them with balls. On their side, the brave inhabitants of Montereau, who only awaited the moment to rush upon the enemy, began to fire on them from the windows. The scene was soon one of complete butchery. The Prince of Wurtemberg narrowly escaped being taken, and in escaping, left behind 3000 of his men either killed or wounded, and 4000 prisoners, with the greater part of his cannon. The most important object, the bridge, remained in possession of Pajol's chasseurs, who crossed it in full gallop, whilst a mine exploded beneath, without carrying away the key-stone. Napoleon, stationed on the hillock of Surville, whence he directed himself the operations of his artillery, experienced at this sight an exceeding great joy, which he made no effort to conceal. In fact, he expected the most brilliant result from this glorious feat of arms.

Once master of Montereau, Napoleon's first care was to send his cavalry beyond, in order to learn the position of the Austrian corps commanded by Colloredo. But this corps had already had time to return to the Yonne, and at this moment formed the rearguard of Prince Schwarzenberg. It was therefore no longer possible to overtake them with troops already fatigued, of whom some, as the 2nd corps of the Paris reserve, had fought all day, and others, as the imperial guard, had marched incessantly during seventy-two hours, making double stages during the day, and passing the night on carts. It was necessary then to pause, and take time to let the army pass by the lately conquered bridge of Montereau, and afterwards advance en masse on Prince Schwarzenberg, to surprise and destroy his various detachments if they found them dispersed, and give battle if they found them concentrated, a battle which the French would fight with the prestige of victory in their favour, and the consciousness that Napoleon had then actually under his command 60,000 men.

Though the bridge of Montereau had been carried twelve hours too late, Napoleon still had reason to be content with the last eight days. In fact, it was but a week since and he was falling back from Brienne to Troyes, not knowing whether he would be able to defend Paris, and yet within this short space of time he had cut Blucher's army in pieces, and put to flight that of Schwarzenberg. Here was a change of position suf-

ficient to satisfy the pride even of the conqueror of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland. Napoleon could now, if he did not exaggerate the political bearings of his success, terminate this war, in obtaining, if not all the Frankfort conditions, at least some of the most essential, and above all, with stipulations bearing no resemblance to the insulting propositions of Chatillon. However, Napoleon was not satisfied because he had not collected all the fruit he had a right to expect from his admirable tactics, and he quarrelled with several of his lieutenants who had not, on this occasion, done all he expected from them. Right or wrong, he complained of Digeon, general of artillery, who had badly supplied the artillery on the eve and even the day of the combat of Montereau; he complained of General Lheritier, who had not charged the Bavarians at the battle of Villeneuve; of General Montbrun, who had not sufficiently defended the bridge of Moret on the Loing (this was not the celebrated Montbrun, who died, as we must remember, at the Moskowa); of Marshal Victor, whom he accused of having made an ill-conducted retreat from Strasburg to Chalons, of having feebly defended the Seine, of having held back the troops at the battle of Villeneuve, of having slept at Salins instead of marching on to Montereau—in short, of exhibiting on all occasions a dejection mingled with ill-humour, which gave bad example. Many replies might have been made to the reproaches addressed to these different officers. As to Marshal Victor, though he did not merit the anger of which he was the object, still it must be acknowledged that he exhibited too much dejection, and seemed to recover his spirits only in presence of the enemy, or under the immediate orders of Napoleon. It must also be admitted that his family were amongst those who exhibited the least zeal for the empress. Napoleon knew it, and it was under feelings arising from these different circumstances that he had deprived the marshal of his command to confer it on General Gerard. This blow, joined to the death of General Chataux, had plunged the unhappy Victor into the profoundest grief. He had remained all day in the thickest of the fight, even when he had no right to issue orders, repressing the tears which welled up through grief at the death of his son-in-law and vexation at the censure passed on him. He repaired the same evening to the castle of Surville, where he found Napoleon, his mind divided between joy at the glorious triumph he had obtained and vexation at the drawbacks with which it was accompanied. Napoleon, on seeing Marshal Victor, could not restrain his anger, and totally forgetting the day of Rothière, reproached him with his conduct during the past two months, and to those reproaches on military topics he added those of a political character, and finished by

telling the marshal that if he were fatigued or ill, it would be better to seek repose and leave the army. The marshal, to whom the order to withdraw at this crisis appeared a disgrace, replied that he was about to shoulder a musket and take his place in the ranks of the old guard, where he should find a soldier's death beside his old companions in arms. Napoleon, deeply moved by the marshal's emotion, extended his hand, and consented to keep him near his person. He could not deprive General Gerard of the command of the 2nd corps, which he had that morning conferred on him, and which that general deserved so well, but he indemnified the marshal in another manner. Two divisions of the young guard—Charpentier and Boyer—had just left Paris; these had been posted along the Essonne, to cover the capital on the left of the Seine. Napoleon formed of these a corps of the guard, and gave the command to Marshal Victor. To place this marshal about the emperor's person, and thus relieve him of all responsibility, was a measure that at the same time soothed his feelings, and restored his military importance, for, freed from the anxieties of a higher command, he again became one of the most efficient officers in the army.

On the next day—the 19th—Napoleon wished to march immediately on Nogent, continue his pursuit of Prince Schwarzenberg, and fight a pitched battle, if he could force him to accept it; but the necessity of making all the troops then under his command pass over the single bridge of Montereau involved the loss of the entire day. These troops consisted of the two Paris divisions of reserve, the 2nd corps, the imperial guard, the Spanish division, and lastly, Marshal Macdonald's corps, which had not been able to cross the Seine at Bray. Whilst these troops employed the time in defiling by the bridge of Montereau, Napoleon was taking measures to overtake the enemy as soon as he could, and if possible, to execute a flank movement for this purpose. The bridges of Bray and Nogent having been destroyed, he ordered preparations to be made for the passage of Marshal Oudinot's corps near Nogent. As to that of Marshal Macdonald, we have seen that he had brought his corps up to Montereau. Napoleon's project was, after having cleared Montereau, to turn to the left, and follow the course of the Seine as far as Méry, which is not far from the confluence of the Seine and Aube. Having arrived at this point, he intended, instead of following Prince Schwarzenberg along the Troyes route, to leave a single corps to observe his movements, and with the main body of his own forces to cross the Seine at Méry, and advance along the right bank, whilst Prince Schwarzenberg advanced along the left; and now, having no longer an enemy in front, Napoleon's troops could march

quicker, and eventually repass the Seine above Troyes, and give Prince Schwarzenberg battle in a position which was not alone his line of retreat, but his line of communication with Blücher. These were two considerable advantages and of the greatest consequence. Here was an instance of the inexhaustible inventiveness of Napoleon's genius. No sooner was one plan frustrated than he devised another, equally practicable and beneficial in result.

Napoleon advanced with the main body of his forces to the left towards Nogent; however, not to break off all communication with the Yonne, and not to overcrowd the highroad of Troyes, he ordered Marshal Macdonald to advance a little to the right, through Saint-Martin-Bosny and Pavillon, whilst General Gerard was to advance a little still more to the right, through Trainel and Avon. He ordered General Alix, the brave defender of Sens, to reoccupy the banks of the Yonne, with the national guards and General Pajol's cavalry. The wounds of this latter general, in consequence of unheard-of fatigues, had again opened. Napoleon, after loading him with rewards, had sent him to Paris, and gave his post to General Alix. He made some additions to the old guard: he added two noble battalions, composed of the old gendarmes of Spain, which raised to eighteen battalions the division of the old guard that he had with him (the other was in the direction of Soissons, with Marshal Mortier), and he added besides several companies of young soldiers, whose duty would be to issue from the ranks and act as sharpshooters, whilst the old veterans remained in line, immovable as walls. Napoleon reiterated his orders, that at Paris fresh battalions of infantry, and at Versailles fresh squadrons of cavalry, should be incessantly formed. He also ordered portable bridges to be constructed with boats collected on the Seine, for on account of the want of this appurtenance of war, the passage of French rivers had become as difficult for us as the passage of foreign ones, and was a continual obstacle to the success of our military combinations.

Napoleon employed, in making these arrangements, the 19th and 20th of February, which his troops passed in crossing the Seine at Montereau, and advancing towards Nogent. He had momentarily taken up his residence\* at the château of Surville,

\* We have already made the observation that from want of acquaintance with Napoleon's correspondence, persons often reproach him with faults that he has not committed, or with intentions that he never entertained. The two days passed at Surville furnish a fresh example of this. Various critics, French as well as foreign, after having asked why, on quitting Blücher, Napoleon did not march direct from Montmirail to Provins, and fall upon Prince Schwarzenberg's flank, instead of making a detour in the rear, through Meaux and Guignes, now ask why he did not cross the Seine at Nogent or

and had great need of the time thus afforded him; for it was not alone the troops immediately under his command that engaged his attention; he had during these two days to arrange for all those that defended the various frontiers of France, and who needed his surveillance no less than the others, and who wanted, above all, the momentum that his spirit alone could impress. General Maison, who had been sent into Belgium to replace General Decaen, with whom Napoleon found fault for having abandoned Willemstadt and Breda, had endeavoured to make head against the various perils with which he was surrounded. Profiting of the moment when he had at his disposal the Roguet and Barrois divisions of the young guard, he made a descent on the English under General Graham, and on the Prussians under General Bulow, and had obliged them to evacuate Antwerp; but being soon after deprived of the Roguet division, having only that of Barrois at his command, with some battalions hastily organised in the dépôts of the ancient 1st corps, the whole not amounting to more than 7000 or 8000 men fit for active service, he had been reduced to the alternative, either of shutting himself in Antwerp, or of leaving this place to try and protect Belgium. He chose the latter part, which was the wisest, and left in Antwerp 12,000 men with the illustrious Carnot, whose services Napoleon had accepted when they were so nobly offered at this trying moment. General Maison then advanced to Brussels, afterwards to Mons and Lille, throwing here and there into the fortresses of the north

Bray, instead of crossing at Montereau alone; and why, after having selected Montereau, he lost two entire days at the castle of Surville? A perusal of Napoleon's letters will furnish a reply to all these questions. At Nogent and Bray the nature of the locality, flat and bestudded with villages on both banks, offered the enemy such chances of resistance that there was no hope of forcing the passage, and besides, the bridges being of wood, it was scarcely possible to preserve them from destruction. At Montereau, on the contrary, it was possible, thanks to the hillock of Surville that commanded the opposite bank, to seize the passage more easily; moreover, the bridge being of stone, there would be more time to save it. The event proves that Napoleon was right. Lastly, the hope of seizing the corps that had advanced as far as Fontainebleau was a last great motive for preferring the passage at Montereau. And Napoleon did try to pass the three bridges at the same time, hoping most from Montereau, which was the only point where he succeeded. It is then evident that he did all he could do. As to the time lost on the 19th and 20th of February, his correspondence proves that he was burning with impatience during the hours employed in traversing the bridge and little town of Montereau. This defile being passed, the entire day of the 20th was needed to concentrate the troops on Nogent to the left. Consequently not a moment was lost, and Napoleon, who traversed on horseback in three hours the distance that his army could only accomplish in twenty-four, might very well stop at Surville, and devote the 20th to his general affairs, which did not less urgently demand his attention than those immediately before his eyes. It is quite clear that now, as ever, he is right, and his critics wrong, when the question touches military operations exclusively. But to be thoroughly convinced of this truth, it would be necessary to read his orders and correspondence, to which historians have not hitherto had access.

what provisions he could collect, with half-clothed, half-armed conscripts that he managed to get from the depôts. Whilst Carnot supported with invincible firmness a fierce bombardment, which, however, did not damage the fleet—the great object of England's anger—General Maison, manœuvring with a handful of soldiers between the three fortresses in the north of France, had, as far as circumstances would permit, saved our frontier, and kept up an active force ready to fall on any detachments of the enemy that came within their reach.

Napoleon, who, in his perilous position, was exceedingly difficult to please, incessantly urged General Maison not to occupy himself exclusively with the fortresses, but to attack in the rear the troops that had marched through Cologne on Champagne, and tormented with unmerited reproaches this general, who had no need of stimulation, for he had shown himself skilful, vigorous, and indefatigable in the defence of this frontier.

Napoleon was more just when he reproached Augereau, but in this instance, too, from the habit of demanding more, in order to obtain less, he was too exacting. Augereau, old, wearied, even disgusted, had, however, recovered his ardour at sight of the danger that threatened France, and which was peculiarly menacing to men whom, like him, the Revolution had compromised. It is true he had at Lyon, 3000 conscripts, drafted into old regiments, but there were no magazines, no victuals, no artillery, no horses. Unfortunately Augereau was not endowed with that creative activity that enables a man to draw from a large population all the resources it can afford. He had nevertheless endeavoured to feed and clothe his conscripts through the instrumentality of the Lyonnaise municipality; he brought from Valence some artillery, he recalled from Grenoble the feeble Marchand division, and sent aides-de-camp to Nîmes to seek there the division of reserve which, like that of Bordeaux, had been intended to pass from the south to the north. By these means he had succeeded, in the beginning of February, in assembling, besides the thousands already at Lyon, 3000 men that had come from Nîmes, and what was still better, 10,000 old soldiers detached from the army of Catalonia, and with these forces he prepared to commence the campaign. But he wished to give his troops some days' repose, before encountering the enemy. It was undoubtedly a matter of vast importance that he should take the field, for his appearance alone in the direction of Chalons and Besançon would cause extreme alarm in the rear of the allied armies, and perhaps determine the retreat of Prince Schwarzenberg, which had not yet commented. Napoleon,



burning with impatience, wrote Augereau the following letter, which merits a place in history:—

“NOGENT-SUR-SEINE, 21st February 1814.

“The minister of war has just laid before me the letter you wrote him on the 16th. That letter annoyed me very much. What! six hours after receiving the first detachments that came from Spain, you were not in the field. Six hours’ rest was sufficient for the men. I won the battle of Nangis with the brigade of dragoons that arrived from Spain, and who had not drawn breath from the time they left Bayonne. You say the six Nîmes battalions want clothes and arms, and are undrilled. What miserable reasons to offer to me, Augereau. I have destroyed 80,000 enemies with battalions composed of conscripts that had not cartouche-boxes, and were scarcely clothed. The national guards, you say, are contemptible: I have 4000 here, from Angers and Brittany, in round hats, no cartouche-boxes, but that have good muskets; I have turned them to good account. There is no money, you say. And whence did you expect to draw money? You can only expect money when we shall have torn a receipt in full from the hands of the enemy. You want horses; take them wherever you can find them. You have no stores; this is too ridiculous. I command you to set out, within twelve hours after the receipt of this letter, to take the field. If you are still the Augereau of Castiglione, keep the command; if your sixty winters oppress you too heavily, resign the command to the oldest of your general officers. France is threatened and in danger; she can only be saved by daring courage and willing service, not by vain temporising. You must have more than six thousand picked men with you; I have not so many, and yet I have destroyed three armies, taken forty thousand prisoners, two hundred pieces of cannon, and three times saved the capital of France. The enemy is flying in every direction. Be the first on the battlefield. This is not a time to act as we have done in these latter days; we must resume the arms, and call up the spirit of ’93. When the French soldiers see your plume waving in the van of the battle, and your breast exposed to the fire of the muskets, you may lead them whither you please.”

The army of Italy was not far distant from Augereau. Napoleon had sent orders to Prince Eugène to repass the Alps and come down to Lyon; but these orders had arrived late, and not until Prince Eugène was already engaged in sharp combats with the Austrian army. Finding his right turned by the Austrian detachments, that English ships had landed on this side of the Adige, Prince Eugène had been obliged to abandon this river, which the army quitted with extreme regret. He had taken up a position behind the Mincio, his left at Goito, his right at Mantua, with a determination to make himself respected. In fact, seeing the Austrians occupied in passing the Mincio on his left, in the direction of Valeggio, he had left a third of his army under the command of General Verdier, and

crossed the river himself, passing over the bridges of Goito and Mantua, then making a rapid flank movement, he had brought the entire mass of his soldiers to bear upon the Austrians as they were marching to the point where they intended to cross the river. He killed, wounded, or made prisoners between 6000 and 7000 men in the plains of Roverbella. He captured besides a considerable quantity of artillery. The affair cost us about 3000 men. Our loss was relatively very considerable, but our troops had displayed the greatest vigour, and their young general exhibited military talents that were beginning to ripen. The Austrians in confusion regained the Adige, deferring their project of conquest until Murat should have fulfilled his promises.

Such was the intelligence that M. de Fascher, an aide-de-camp of Prince Eugène, brought Napoleon, at the very time that the battle of Montereau was fought. It was a delicate subject, and one requiring profound deliberation, that of persisting in the determination to evacuate Italy, after a splendid victory on the Mincio, and still more splendid victories between the Marne and the Seine. When Napoleon had commanded this evacuation, he had done so, not alone on account of the necessity he was under of concentrating his forces, but in the hope that the troops he should draw from Italy would arrive on the Rhône in time to be useful there. The present position of affairs called for fresh consideration. Certainly, if Prince Eugène had been able to bring to Lyon in time the 30,000 soldiers that had just gained the battle of Roverbella, if he had been able to join these to General Suchet's 50,000 veteran troops, and that with such a force he had fallen, passing through Dijon, on the rear of Prince Schwarzenberg, it is probable that none of the allies would have repassed the Rhine, and such a result would undoubtedly have repaid every imaginable sacrifice. But Napoleon, who learned too late that the allies intended to make a winter campaign, had not sent orders to Prince Eugène until the end of January to return to France, and the prince was then engaged in the most difficult operations, from which he could not withdraw until victory should have crowned his arms. In fact, were the order for his recall persevered in, it would be impossible for him to be at Lyon before the end of March, and by that time Napoleon should either have yielded to his enemies or been victorious over them. Moreover, this retreat would be the voluntary abandonment of Italy, that is to say, the loss of a pledge which would be of such vast importance at Chatillon. Though at the actual time Napoleon was only fighting for the line of the Rhine, still to hold firm possession of the Mincio and the Po would be a means of facilitating the concession of the

Rhine by way of compensation. Having then little chance of bringing back the troops of Prince Eugène in time, and many chances of preserving Italy, which was of very great importance with regard to the negotiations, he took the resolution—which experience has since shown to be a deplorable one—not to abandon Lombardy. Though his reasons for this line of conduct were of incontestable value, he was evidently influenced by the confidence inspired by his late successes, and this is to be regretted, for the safest course would have been to recall Eugène with his 30,000 men. In war the chain of events is so easily prolonged that we ought never to neglect a prudent precaution through fear of it being too late.

Napoleon had also to consider the position of the armies that were defending the Pyrenees, and whose assistance would have been so useful to him. Marshal Suchet was incessantly asking permission to evacuate Barcelona and some of the fortresses in Catalonia. As to those of Lower Catalonia and the kingdom of Valencia, such as Sagonta, Penisscola, Tortosa, Mequinenza, and Lerida, the time was past when they could have been opportunely evacuated. By withdrawing 7000 or 8000 men from Barcelona, and as many from some other small garrisons, and joining these 15,000 to the 15,000 that remained under his command after the division that had been sent to Lyon, Marshal Suchet would have at his disposal 30,000 soldiers. With such a force he might still decide the fate of France were he summoned to Lyon in person. He awaited the reply of the war minister until the 11th of February, when not having received any intelligence he returned to the frontier, leaving 8000 men in the fortress of Barcelona, which he did not dare to abandon without a formal order. Napoleon endeavoured to repair this fault, which was exclusively imputable to the war minister, by giving Marshal Suchet orders to evacuate, not alone Barcelona, but all the posts he still occupied, and thus to create for himself a *corps d'armée*, with which he was to march on Lyon, leaving in Perpignan and the fortresses of Roussillon only the garrisons indispensably necessary.

Marshal Soult, thanks to Lord Wellington's temporising system, had kept his position, not on the Bidassoa nor the Niva, which he had lost one after the other, but on the Adour and the Gave d'Oleron. He had placed four divisions in Bayonne under General Reille, two on the Adour under General Foy, and four behind the Gave d'Oleron, which he commanded himself. General Harispe formed his extreme left at Navarreins; he formed the centre himself at Peyrehorade, at the confluence of the Gave d'Oleron with the Adour; General Reille formed his right at Bayonne. Master of the navigation of the Adour, he could provision Bayonne, and supply with victuals and munitions of

war every portion of his army. Thus posted behind the angle of two rivers, with about 40,000 veteran troops (deducting the 15,000 sent to Napoleon), he held his adversary in check, who dared neither to advance without the Spaniards, for fear of not being sufficiently strong, nor penetrate into France with them, lest they might excite an insurrection amongst the French peasants by pillaging. The English general delayed to assume the offensive until, in the first place, the rains, which were very abundant, should cease, and secondly, until his government should send money to pay the Spaniards, which was the only means of preserving discipline amongst them.

Napoleon, still flattering himself to be able to draw some resources from this brave army, sent fresh orders to Marshal Soult to fill up the vacant places in his regiments with conscripts, and to be ready to send him at the shortest notice 10,000 men. Not wishing to leave Bordeaux unprotected, on account both of the moral and political importance of this city, Napoleon determined not to borrow these troops from Marshal Soult excepting he found himself at the last extremity. His late successes gave him reason to hope that he would not be forced to take this step.

The two days passed at Montereau, during which the troops were employed in crossing to the other side of the river, had been, as we have seen, very usefully employed. Before leaving Montereau, Napoleon thought he ought to reply to the letter that Prince de Schwarzenberg's aide-de-camp had brought him.

He had just learned what had taken place at Chatillon since the resumption of the conferences. On the 16th of February, M. de Caulaincourt received a private letter from M. de Metternich, in which this minister informed him of the efforts he had made to surmount the ill feeling that prevailed in the allied courts, acknowledging that to attain his object he had made use of M. de Caulaincourt's confidential letter. He also informed the French plenipotentiary that, by formally accepting the Chatillon bases, hostilities might be immediately stopped. M. de Metternich, in conclusion, earnestly begged M. de Caulaincourt to profit of this opportunity to conclude peace, "for," he said, "it will be the last."

The next day—the 17th—the plenipotentiaries assembled, and declared they would resume the conferences only on receiving a positive affirmation from the French plenipotentiary that he was ready to submit to the conditions proposed in the last sitting. They afterwards presented a series of preliminary articles, more insulting if possible than the protocol of the 9th of February. The import of these articles was that France should retire within her ancient limits, with some slight alterations of the frontier line, which did not alter in any way the

general principle : she was not to interfere in any way in the fate of the ceded territories, nor in the general regulation of the European States ; she was merely to be told that Germany should compose a federal State, that Holland, united to Belgium, should constitute one kingdom, that Italy should be independent of France, and that Austria should hold possessions there, the extent of which the allied powers would determine at a later period ; that continental Spain should be restored to Ferdinand VII. ; that in return for these sacrifices, England should give up Martinique, and Guadaloupe besides, if Sweden required it, but she was to keep the Isle of France and the Isle of Bourbon. As to the Cape, Malta, and the Ionian Isles, there was no more said of them than of all the possessions given up by France in Italy, Germany, and Poland.

Such were these articles, that were already laid down in the protocol of the 9th of February, but in a less explicit and less offensive manner. They were now offered as conditions for an armistice, which France had not officially demanded, and for which, above all, she had not promised to pay such a price.

M. de Caulaincourt listened calmly to these propositions, and said that probably the allies did not wish for peace, since to offers radically so vexatious they added forms so insulting. He added, that he would receive a copy of these articles, in order to submit them to his sovereign, and that at a proper time he would communicate with the plenipotentiaries on the subject. They asked whether he had a counter-project to propose ; he replied that he would present one at a later period ; and we must say, notwithstanding our respect for a man who through pure patriotism had undertaken a most painful task, that the fear of compromising the interests of peace hindered him perhaps from giving vent to his indignation. The diplomatists, in fact, who were opposed to him, believed that though he might consider the propositions oppressive, he would still accept them, and if they should have difficulties to encounter, they would arise from Napoleon's inflexible temper. It would have been better had M. de Caulaincourt exhibited as much indignation as Napoleon himself would have done. Such conduct might have compromised, not peace, which could always be obtained on the proffered conditions, but the imperial throne, and M. de Caulaincourt ought, like Napoleon, to have preferred honour to the throne. We must, however, admit, that though Napoleon might have reasoned in this way, M. de Caulaincourt, his minister, was not equally free to do so, for next to France, the throne of his master ought to be the chief object of his solicitude. Be this as it may, M. de Caulaincourt gave the most prudent advice to Napoleon. He said he was well aware that the proposed conditions of peace were not acceptable, but

there were no means of ameliorating them; that, in fact, the emperor could never obtain peace on the Frankfort bases, except by driving the allies into the Rhine, but that, profiting of his late victories to effect a compromise, he might be able, by satisfying England, to obtain better conditions than the limits of 1790; still he could never get what he understood by the natural limits. It was indeed possible by giving up Spain, Italy, all that he held of Germany, Holland, and Belgium, to retain Mayence, Coblenz, and Cologne—in a word, to secure the Rhine by abandoning the Schelde. And certainly peace on such conditions would be very satisfactory, if not to Napoleon, at least to France. With one more victory the emperor might be sure of it, and it was wise to give him this advice. M. de Caulaincourt, without entering into details as to how much of the natural limits ought to be sacrificed, implored Napoleon not to be obstinate, and told him, very justly, that he was mistaken if he believed that his recent victories had replaced him in the position he held at the time the Frankfort bases were proposed, but that he might still obtain peace on terms approaching those of Frankfort by presenting a moderate counter-project.

When Napoleon received these communications at Montereau, the blood rushed to his brow, and he immediately wrote the following letter to M. de Caulaincourt:—

“SURVILLE, NEAR MONTEREAU, 19th February 1814.

“I look upon you as a man under compulsory confinement, who knows nothing of my affairs, and whose opinions are formed on the reports of impostors. As soon as I arrive at Troyes, I shall send you a counter-project. I thank Heaven for receiving your despatch, for there is not a Frenchman whose blood it will not make boil with indignation. This is why I wish to draw up my ultimatum myself.

“I am very much displeased that you did not explain formally that France, in order to be as strong as she was in 1790, must have her natural limits as a compensation for the partition of Poland, the destruction of the Republic of Venice, the secularisation of the German clergy, and the great acquisitions made by the English in Asia.

“Say that you are waiting orders from your government, and that it is very natural you should be obliged to wait, since your couriers are obliged to make journeys of seventy-two hours, and of three you have yet received no tidings. In retaliation, I have ordered the arrest of the English couriers.

“I am so excited by the infamous proposals you have sent me, that I feel myself already dishonoured by having placed myself in a position where such proposals could be made to you. I shall let you know from Troyes or Chatillon my intentions, and I believe I would rather lose Paris than see such propositions made to the French people. You are always talking of the Bourbons; I would rather see the Bourbons in France, on reasonable terms, than submit to the infamous propositions you have sent me.”

His first emotions having subsided, Napoleon, appreciating the good advice of M. de Caulaincourt, consented to continue the negotiations, but no longer on the bases he had commissioned his plenipotentiary to bear to Manheim, and which comprehended the Rhine as far as the Wahal, a kingdom for Prince Jerome in Germany, one for Prince Eugène in Italy, and a part of Piedmont for France. These demands were no longer urged; the new bases only asked the limits *pures et simples*, that is to say, the Rhine as far as Dusseldorf; beyond Dusseldorf, the Meuse; nothing in Italy but an indemnity for Prince Eugène; and lastly, France's right to take part in regulating the fate of European States. Napoleon did not limit himself to this official communication; knowing that there existed more than one cause of misunderstanding between the allies, that the Austrians were notoriously tired of the war, and offended at the affected supremacy of the Russians, he conceived the idea of replying to the proposals made him by addressing a letter himself to the Emperor Francis, and by having Major-General Berthier write one to Prince de Schwarzenberg. In these two letters, drawn up with extraordinary care, he endeavoured to speak the language, as he understood it, of sound policy and good sense. He said an appeal had been made to victory, and victory had decided; that his soldiers were still as great as ever, and would soon be as numerous; that he had full confidence in the result of this struggle, should it be prolonged; that notwithstanding he was marching at that moment on Troyes, and the approaching engagement would take place between a French and an Austrian army, that he believed he would conquer, and that his confidence on this point ought not to astonish any one; but that having experienced the chances of war, he was willing to consider this supposition as doubtful, and would therefore reason on a double hypothesis. Should he conquer, the coalition would be annihilated, and the allies would find him as exacting as ever, a line of conduct that would be authorised by his dangers and his triumphs. But if, on the contrary, he were conquered, the balance of power in Europe would be disturbed a little more than it already was, and that to the advantage of Russia, and at the expense of Austria; that the latter would be a little more constrained, a little more cipated to, by a haughty rival; that consequently Austria would gain nothing by a battle which, on one hand, would deprive her of all the fruits of the battle of Leipsic, and on the other, would render her more dependent than she was on Russia; that whatever Austria might desire, in Italy, for example, France would immediately concede to her as soon as she consented to repass the Alps; that thus, without reckoning the ties of blood, which ought to have some influence, the true interest of Austria was

to conclude peace on the conditions she had herself offered at Frankfort.

To these reasons, mingled with many sweet and flattering words addressed to the Emperor Francis, Napoleon added others not less specious in a letter intended for Prince de Schwarzenberg, and well calculated to touch the memory of this prince, to awaken his military prudence, and stir up his pride, which the Russians and Prussians were incessantly offending. Both these letters were sent as a reply to the last proceedings of Prince de Schwarzenberg. Unfortunately, though very cleverly reasoned and written, they did not quite accord with the moral position of the allied powers, which Napoleon, in the midst of his camp, could not fully appreciate. Undoubtedly, had Austria been less strongly linked to the coalition, if she had not feared to break up this coalition, which, once broken, left her within the iron grasp of Napoleon, if she had not so deeply distrusted the character of the latter, she might have listened to considerations which in many respects accorded with the policy of the Emperor Francis, with the wisdom of his prime minister, and with the wounded self-love of the commander-in-chief. But it was natural to suppose that Austria, instead of keeping these letters private, would show them to her allies, in order to place her good faith above all suspicion, and that then there would be fresh protestations of fidelity, and that the bonds of the alliance would be more closely serried in order to resist an enemy who alternately played the part of the lion and the fox. There was therefore more risk than gained by these communications with the court of Austria.

Be this as it may, Napoleon, after having attended to all his various concerns, and finding his troops amount to the number he desired, left the château of Surville on the morning of the 21st, crossed the Seine at Montereau, and reascended the river as far as Nogent. He found the country everywhere so ravaged, that despairing of victualling his troops, he earnestly implored that provisions should be sent from Paris. Even at Nogent everything was in a frightful state, in consequence of the late engagement. He granted out of his private purse assistance to the sisters of charity, who had ventured under the fire of the enemy in order to attend the wounded soldiers. He also gave relief to those of the inhabitants who had suffered most.

The next day—the 22nd—continuing to remount the Seine, he advanced in the direction of Méry, a point where the course of the Seine turns, and instead of continuing from west to east, describes a line from north-west to south-east, running from Méry to Troyes. Napoleon followed the highroad to Troyes, bringing with him the troops of Marshal Oudinot (division of the young Rothenbourg guard and the Boyer d'Espagne division),



the old guard, Ney and Victor's division of the young guard, the cavalry reserve, and lastly, the artillery reserve. On the right, through the cross-roads, Marshal Macdonald advanced with the 11th corps; a little more to the right General Gerard advanced with the 2nd corps and the Paris reserve. On the other bank of the Seine, in the neighbourhood of Sézanne, Grouchy was preparing with his cavalry and the Leval division to join Napoleon by the way of Nogent; and Marmont, with the 6th corps, occupied the country between the Seine and the Marne, for the purpose of observing Blücher's movements, and combining his forces with those of Marshal Mortier, who had orders to advance on Soissons. Napoleon's forces, including the troops of Grouchy and Leval, but not those of Marmont, amounted to about 70,000.

Napoleon was still expecting and most anxious for a battle. Since the commencement of the campaign until now he had not had 70,000 men under his command, without reckoning Marmont's troops, that one day's march sufficed to join with his. Thus, as we have already said, seeking a combination that might render this battle decisive, Napoleon had abandoned the design of pursuing Prince de Schwarzenberg along the high-road of Troyes, and had conceived the project of crossing the Seine at Méry, and remounting the river rapidly along the right bank, leaving Prince de Schwarzenberg on the left; he would thus reach the high ground of Troyes before his opponent, and then recrossing the river, offer him battle between Troyes and Vandœuvres, after having mastered his line of retreat. Should this plan be executed, the most important results would undoubtedly ensue.

On the morning of the 22nd, orders having been given for the carrying out of these designs, our vanguard drove back Prince de Wittgenstein's rearguard towards Châtres, and threw themselves afterwards on the bridge of Méry, which is very long, because it spans several arms of the river and a great deal of marshy ground. This bridge, built on piles, had been half burned; nevertheless, our sharpshooters, running on the tops of the piles, kept up a keen combat with the enemy's sharpshooters, and succeeded in getting possession of Méry. But soon a violent conflagration bursting out in the city stopped our progress. The Russians had set fire to Méry. The heat became so intense that we were obliged to cede the place, not to the enemy, but to the flames, and regain the banks of the Seine. At the same moment numerous troops appeared outside Méry, and there was no passing beyond. These troops that made their appearance were neither the Russians of Prince de Wittgenstein nor the Bavarians of Marshal Wrède, who might have been naturally expected in that direction, but the

Prussians themselves, whom on the 15th Mortier was pursuing from the Marne, and who for some time past had seemed to take no part in the warfare. Within seven days they had rallied and returned, with whom? under what leader? Here are questions that might naturally be asked, and which Napoleon asked himself with well-founded astonishment.

His inquiries were soon satisfied by prisoners and reports that arrived from the banks of the Marne. Since the emperor had beaten in detail the four corps of the army of Silesia, these corps had endeavoured to recover their defeat, and had partly succeeded. Finding themselves briskly pursued along the Soissons route, the Generals d'York and Sacken had turned to the right, and marching through Oulchy, Fismes, and Reims, had regained Chalons, where Blucher had appointed to meet them. Combined with the *débris* of Kleist and Langeron, they formed a force of 32,000 men. The pride of this army had been deeply humiliated. Composed of the most ardent spirits amongst the Russians and the Prussians, having at their head the daring Blucher and all the confederates of the *Tugend-Bund*, they were inconsolable at having experienced such terrible reverses, especially as they had mocked the timidity of the army of Bohemia. For this reason, the desire of again appearing in the battlefield was intense among Blucher's soldiers, and they possessed the merit of wishing to repair their disaster at any risk. An opportunity had seemed to offer, of which they had eagerly profited.

Marmont, after the terrible day of Vauchamps, had stopped at Etoges. This break in the pursuit on the part of the French indicated clearly that Napoleon, repeating against the army of Bohemia the manœuvre that had succeeded so well against the army of Silesia, had fallen upon Prince de Schwarzenberg. This conjecture amounted to certainty, when it was remembered that Prince de Schwarzenberg having advanced as far as Fontainebleau and Provins, Napoleon could not allow him to come nearer Paris without making an attempt to stop his progress. Nothing now remained for the army of Silesia but to advance immediately from the Marne to the Seine, where they would probably find the Marmont detachment that had been left to observe Blucher's army, and on which they would revenge themselves for the four terrible days of defeat they had experienced.

These resolutions being taken, Blucher had given his troops only two days' repose, and had sent courier after courier to Prince de Schwarzenberg to inform him of his new enterprise. The arrival of considerable reinforcements had confirmed him in his projects. He had had hitherto only about half of the Kleist and Langeron corps. The remainder of these two corps,

which had been replaced by others in the blockade of the fortresses, had now joined. The corps of St. Priest, at first sent in the direction of Coblenz, arrived also; and on the 18th, Marshal Blucher, marching from Chalons to Arcis, had received a reinforcement of from 15,000 to 16,000 men; so that his army, which Napoleon had reduced from more than 60,000 to 32,000, was already suddenly increased to 48,000 combatants, and was consequently in a position to make a formidable move—so true is it that in war passion often supplies the place of genius, substituting the power of the will for that of the intellect.

Blucher had therefore set out for Arcis, and having learned on the way that Prince de Schwarzenberg, fallen back on Troyes, was waiting his arrival there, in order to engage the enemy, he advanced in a straight line on Méry, to arrive sooner at the meeting place, and be able to fall on the flank of the French army, which he believed to be still pursuing the army of Bohemia.

Napoleon, finding Blucher on the right bank of the Seine, could not any longer think of throwing his troops into that quarter. Though he did not for a moment imagine that the Prussian general could have so soon assembled an army of 50,000 men, he cared little for his appearance, and did not despair of meeting Prince de Schwarzenberg hand to hand on the morrow or next day, and overthrowing him. His soldiers again believed in their own superiority, he in his good fortune, and they all marched forward joyfully to the great battle that was about to take place. Napoleon resolved to march the next day, the 23rd of February, on Troyes.

But whilst he was seeking this battle, his principal adversary avoided the encounter. Prince de Schwarzenberg was justly alarmed at finding himself in the presence of Napoleon, whom he believed at the head of considerable forces, and he dreaded to risk the fate of the coalition on a battle. He had received exaggerated reports as to the number of troops arrived from Spain, and as to their valour, he had experience of that at the battle of Nangis. He did not estimate Napoleon's forces at less than 80,000 or 90,000 men, their spirits flushed with victory and the consciousness of being in a remarkable position. Separated from Blucher, of whose near approach he was not aware, he was reduced to 100,000 men, in consequence of the battle he had fought, and the detachments he had been obliged to send off. These 100,000 men were not so concentrated as the 80,000 attributed to Napoleon, and it did not appear wise to Prince de Schwarzenberg to venture a hundred against eighty, when with 170,000 he had been held in check at La Rothière by 50,000 (this was the number erroneously attributed to Napoleon on

that day). And then, should the allies be beaten, they would be at one blow flung back upon the Rhine, and so lose in one day the fruits of the two campaigns of 1812 and 1813, which would render the common oppressor more exacting, more tyrannical than ever. As for the Russians and the Prussians, ruled by passion, and who had much to gain by victory, if they had much to lose by defeat, there might be, on their side, cogent reasons for incurring great risks; but for the Austrians, who ran the chance of losing in one day what they had gained in a year, and the possession of which Napoleon offered to secure to them without fighting—they, to whom victory only promised an augmentation of Russian preponderance—truly, the prolongation of the warfare would not be worth the trouble to the Austrians. Napoleon's double letter, though involving the disadvantage of too openly revealing his intention of creating dissensions amongst his enemies, had not, however, failed to excite some discontent by awakening in the Austrian mind very natural reflections. One disquieting circumstance was, moreover, added to those that already existed in favour of an armistice. Whilst the allies had received positive intelligence of the arrival of a powerful detachment at Paris by the Orleans route, a report was circulated that a still stronger detachment, commanded by Marshal Suchet in person, had arrived at Lyon from Perpignan; but in the stirring times of war the public mind becomes impressionable, and facts are exaggerated to a stature that renders them falsehoods. The Count de Bubna, posted between Geneva and Lyon, fearing to be attacked by 50,000 or 60,000 men, begged immediate assistance, and prognosticated dreadful calamities if his entreaties did not meet proper attention. What, in fact, would become of the allies, were a battle fought and lost in Franche-Comté in their rear? To prevent so calamitous an event it would be necessary to send immediately 20,000 men to the assistance of Count de Bubna, which would be in fact to reduce the main army to 80,000, and so stand before Napoleon with forces of nearly the same numerical strength as his: this would be a serious indiscretion. There was certainly Blucher, whose actual force Prince de Schwarzenberg was ignorant of; but he knew the obstinacy of his temper to be such, that he could not flatter himself with having at his disposal the 40,000 or 50,000 men that the Prussian general might bring with him.

Influenced by these reasons, which were of some weight, the prudent Prince de Schwarzenberg thought it better to avoid a pitched battle, and to fall back on Brienne, Bar-sur-Aube, and Langres, and to wait there the coming reinforcements, sending at the same time 20,000 men to the Count de Bubna; and meanwhile, in order to avert an attack from Napoleon, Prince

de Schwarzenberg thought it advisable to reply to his double letter, and to propose an armistice—an armistice which might perhaps lead to peace, or if it did not lead to peace, might afford time to make sure of victory.

These considerations were debated the same day—the 22nd—in a council held at headquarters, in presence of the sovereigns, the generals, and ministers of the coalition. Alexander, lately so hot-headed, dared not become suddenly an apostle of temporisation, but both his sentiments and language were less haughty than before. The violent party, though deprived of Blücher and his staff, who were at Méry, still had, however, some speakers, who declared that to fall back would be a weakness, of which the moral effect would certainly be such that in the position in which the allies then were, they should either conquer or perish; that by a junction with the army in Silesia, their forces would be nearly double those of Napoleon, and that consequently they must conquer, for it would be degrading to suppose they could be vanquished when they fought with the advantage of two to one on their side; that in any case they had no other resource, for a retrograde movement would totally ruin the affairs of the coalition; that to return on Langres would be to go back to a country poor in itself, and impoverished still more by the recent visit of the armies—that they could not find provisions there; and the retreat on Langres would soon involve a retreat on Besançon; that falling back in that manner would restore Napoleon all his prestige as well as all his partisans, and induce the French peasants, who had already killed several of the allied soldiers that wandered from their ranks, to rise en masse and slaughter all who would not be formed into *corps d'armée*; that, in short, to hesitate, to fall back, was to perish.

No person could at this moment say whether the advocates of the prudent or the impetuous policy were right. If the latter estimated correctly the respective forces of the two armies, the former yielded to well-founded fears when they refused to stake all for all against Napoleon, for if he gained the battle—and in the actual disposition of his troops he had many chances of gaining it—the allies would be thrown into the Rhine. We are therefore justified in saying that Prince de Schwarzenberg, though his calculations exhibited a certain timidity, was more in the right than his adversaries.

Be this as it may, the moderate party insisted, and as late events had added to their influence what Blücher and his partisans had lost, and as the Emperor Alexander supported Blücher's party less warmly, Prince de Schwarzenberg's opinion prevailed, and the proposition of an armistice was resolved on. This proposition did not pledge the allies to anything, neither as to

the conditions of the peace nor the conditions of the armistice. Should the proposition not be accepted, it would at least occupy Napoleon's attention some hours, and perhaps delay his march a day, which would be a matter of importance. If, on the contrary, the propositions were accepted, the allies would find time to concentrate their forces, the one party at Langres, the other at Chalons, and reinforce their number considerably; and an acceptance would also afford a chance—which was the secret wish of Austria—of resuming pacific negotiations with greater hopes of success, for, hostilities once suspended, they would not be so lightly resumed. The advocates of war *à outrance* consented to this proceeding, in the hope that it would lead to no result, but might perhaps procure a respite for a few hours, which all parties admitted would be an incontestable advantage. Prince Schwarzenberg made choice of Prince Wenceslas de Liechtenstein to send to the French headquarters with the proposal of appointing commissioners, who, at the outposts of the two armies, should arrange the conditions of the armistice.

On the 23rd, Napoleon was marching from Chartres on Troyes, when, within sight of the latter city, Prince Wenceslas de Liechtenstein presented himself and delivered Prince de Schwarzenberg's message. Napoleon, seeing the persistence of the allies in demanding an armistice, concluded much too quickly that they were in a difficult position, and resolved to appear to listen to them, but without pausing in his progress, as it was not his part to extricate them from their embarrassment. He was elated by success, by the consciousness of the great deeds he had just accomplished, by the hope of those he would yet achieve, and felt no prudential promptings that might induce him to seem modest or circumspect—on the contrary, to boast might be his best policy. He adopted it, therefore, as much because it suited his feelings at the moment as because it accorded with the calculations he had made.

Prince Wenceslas having largely complimented him on the great deeds he had lately performed, Napoleon listened with visible satisfaction, talked a great deal of what he intended to do, exaggerated in an extraordinary manner the extent of his forces, complained of the insulting propositions that had been made him, and passing from one subject to another, asked if it were true that several of the Bourbon princes had already arrived at the headquarters of the allies. In fact, the Duke d'Angoulême had tried to get a reception at Lord Wellington's headquarters; the Duke de Berry was on board a frigate at Belle-Ile, endeavouring by his presence to excite the people of Vendée; and lastly, the father of these two princes, the Count d'Artois himself, acting as representative of Louis XVIII., who had retired to Hartwel, had gone to Switzerland, then to

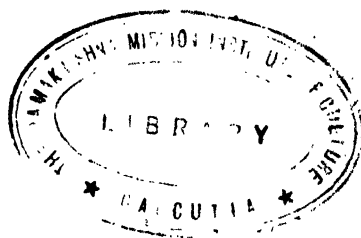
Franche-Comté, to obtain admission to the headquarters of the allied sovereigns. However, none of these princes had yet succeeded in his enterprise.

The envoy of Prince de Schwarzenberg hastened to disavow, on the part of Austria, any participation in plots against the imperial dynasty, and affirmed, which was true, that the Count d'Artois had been dismissed from headquarters. This declaration gave Napoléon more pleasure than he cared to testify. He said he was about to consider the proposition that had been made him, and that he would send a reply from the city of Troyes, into which he intended to enter immediately.

This confidence, which it was very well to display to the Prussians and the Russians, was not so well timed with regard to the Austrians, who were desirous of peace, and to whom hopes of attaining it ought to have been held out, in order to induce them to moderation in their views, or at least to hesitation in their counsels.

Having arrived at the gates of Troyes, Napoleon found there the rearguard of the allies determined to make a defence; they even threatened to burn the city if the French persisted in forcing an immediate entrance. Such a threat coming from the Russians was something too serious not to command attention. A verbal agreement was made by which the one party was to leave Troyes the next day—the 24th—and the other was to enter the city, neither striking a blow, or at least committing any act of aggression or resistance that might endanger the city. Accordingly, on the next day, the last of the allied troops departed peacefully from Troyes, and our soldiers entered the town in the same manner. And Napoleon, who twenty days before had passed through this city almost a defeated man, his mind filled with dark presentiments, not knowing whether he should be able to defend Paris, and even necessitated to order that his wife, his son, the members of his government, and his treasury, should be removed from the capital—Napoleon, we say, now reappeared at Troyes, after having, with a handful of men, put to flight all the armies of Europe; and he beheld the allies, late so insolent, now praying him, if not to lay aside his sword, at least to allow it to rest for a few days in the scabbard. Wondrous change of fortune! which proves that a man of determination and genius, by persevering in warfare, can sometimes draw unexpected and fortunate opportunities from circumstances apparently desperate. But was this last change of fortune sufficiently decisive to serve as a permanent basis for the future? Painful doubt, which it became the task of prudence united to genius to convert into certainty. With regard to the allies, it would be necessary to combine the most skilful diplomacy with victory, in order

to reduce the boasting of one party without depressing the moderation of the other, and seize, so to speak, on the wing the favourable opportunity for arranging a very difficult task, that of negotiating propositions intermediate between those of Frankfort and Chatillon. That was the problem that remained to be solved. Napoleon, unfortunately, trusted too much to his wonderful change of fortune to be prudent, and it is true that at this moment he was justified in indulging the strongest hopes if he only looked at external appearances. Ah! that we too could indulge the same hopes, and conjure up, even for an instant, a flattering illusion during this sad recital of past events, for in 1814 the question at issue was not the fate of a man, no, nor of that which, next to our native land, is perhaps the most interesting consideration in the world, the destiny of a great man—no, it was the destiny of France that was at stake—France, half whose greatness might still be preserved, and for whom Mayence might be saved by the sacrifice of Antwerp.



END OF VOL. IX.











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